

The family that built and owned this mansion got a surprising start as shepherds.

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Three new apprentices of Zhihua Temple Music breathe new life into the deserted temple.

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His patrons were left biting their nails for 20 days awaiting the re-opening of the country's first comics shop.

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## “Independent Director” Stymied in Appeal of Penalties

*‘I saw myself as an honorary consultant, putting me outside the responsibilities of independent directors as prescribed by current laws.’*  
— Lu Jiahao



Photo by Photocomme

By Shan Jinliang

An unprecedented lawsuit filed against China's securities watchdog ended in disappointment on Monday for the plaintiff, the former independent director of a large retail company based in Zhengzhou, Henan province. The man was challenging the government administration's penalizing him for being involved in corporate fraud, of which he says he is completely innocent.

“I expected the court's judgment could go like this, but I cannot understand or accept it. I will file a final appeal with the People's Supreme Court,” said Lu Jiahao, 71, former director of the Chinese retailer Zhengzhou Baiwen, after his second case against the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) was dismissed by the Beijing Higher People's Court on November 15.

The case opened on October 23, but was rejected over the same technicality that led to the dismissal of the original case by the Beijing's No. 1 Intermediate People's Court in August.

The issue at hand in all these cases is a fine of 100,000 yuan (\$12,000) slapped on Lu by the CSRC for being involved in corporate fraud.

### Working outside of management

Lu was appointed “public director” of Zhengzhou Baiwen in early 1995. He said that according to his agreement with company Chairman Li Fuqian, he was not to take part in actual corporate operations and would not receive one yuan in salary.

“I was independent from the management team,” said Lu, “I saw myself as an honorary consultant, putting me outside the responsibilities

### Brief History of Zhengzhou Baiwen

Zhengzhou Baiwen, established in 1949, emerged as China's largest home appliance retailer in the 1990s.

Starting in 1998, the company sunk into the red as a result of mismanagement and the influence of the Asian Financial Crisis.

In April 1999, Zhengzhou Baiwen released an annual report revealing it had 1.7 billion yuan of debt, and the next year, trading of the company's stock was suspended.

In February this year, the Shandong-based Sanlian Group purchased

Zhengzhou Baiwen and began reorganization of the company.

On November 12, following the CSRC's probes, the Zhengzhou People's Intermediate Court found company Chairman Li Fuqian, General Manager Lu Yide and Financial Director Du Qunfu guilty of providing false financial records and annual reports. Li received a sentence of five years in prison and two years probation, while Lu and Du got sentences of two years with probation periods of three years.

in September 2001.

Lu claimed that he should not have been among those punished and was ignorant of the fraud, as he only attended two board meetings a year. He said, “Only three people, the chairman of the board, the general manager and the financial manager, can make final decisions in the company.”

Beijing Today tried to contact the CSRC, but it made no comments on Lu's claims.

The CSRC made its judgment on the grounds that the company's board of directors did not question or stop the release of the falsified annual reports and other corporate information before the company's listing. They were therefore found liable for administrative negligence.

According to Lu, he and the other 11 board members filed for an administrative reexamination of the penalties with the commission, but the initial judgment was reaffirmed by the CSRC this March. Lu then struck out on his own and filed an individual lawsuit against the commission on April 22 with the Beijing People's No. 1 Intermediate Court.

## Hutong Committee Gets Fresh Faces

By Xiao Rong

The era of old folks with red armbands looking over their communities may be nearing an end. Last week, the Xisi Beitoutiao community began a trial of a new two-level model of neighborhood committee open to a broader range of members.

On Saturday, 92 resident representatives chose nine of twelve candidates that either signed up themselves or were nominated by local residents to places on the neighborhood committee. Unlike in the past, all are volunteers and will receive no compensation from the local government for their efforts. They will hold full responsibility for management and decision-making in the community.

Among those on the new committee are a policeman, a middle-school president, an accountant and some members of the earlier committee.

“I'm just happy to have been chosen by my neighbors. It doesn't matter if I get paid or not, I have my own retirement pension,” said Wei Guo, 73, director of the committee and also the oldest of the volunteers.

“The nine new members will act as the standing committee for the neighborhood, meaning they will oversee all work in the community. They will hire a special group of community administrators to take care of daily work,” said Chong Juyi, director of the Fusuijing Street Office that administers the Xisi Beitoutiao community.

According to Chong, this is the first trial of this model of neighborhood committee in which work is divided between a decision-making body and an operative body. Similar reforms have already been implemented among communities in Shanghai and Guangzhou.

“The biggest advantage of the new model is that it can fully arouse the enthusiasm of local residents to get more involved in community affairs,” said Ji Dongfeng, former director of the Xisi Beitoutiao neighborhood committee and a member of the new group.

For 25-year-old Li Ning, an accountant in a local hospital and also the youngest of the nine new leaders, this system has made it possible for her

to get more involved in community work. She is interested enough in local affairs that she nominated herself for the election.

“My work keeps me very busy, but I'm happy to be able to do something for the community. This new model enables us standing committee members to concentrate on decision-making about significant issues, while the administrators are responsible for the daily work,” she said.

Hao Jianfu, vice-president of the Beijing No. 41 Middle School, hopes to use his committee position to strengthen communication between his school and the community.

“Though located in the community, our school was not a formal member according to the old community autonomy rule,” he said. “But now things are quite different. I'm both a member of the standing committee and the president of the school, which means that the school will get involved in community development.”

In the past, only individuals were allowed to participate in neighborhood committees. However, under the new system, schools, factories or other units located in communities will be allowed to participate in local affairs and have some representation on the committees.

The standing committee will have the power to hire and fire community administrators and can refuse to fulfill tasks that are not within its authority. If the tasks have to be done, street offices or higher organizations must allocate certain subsidies to cover the expenses.

“This regulation could lead to conflicts of interest between the standing committee and community administrators. For one thing, full-time administrators may complain about being overseen by part-time, volunteer standing committee members,” said Chong.

In his view, community administrators should be guaranteed certain powers. Other residents have expressed that the efficacy of the new model will depend on how well the standing committee fulfills its duties.

Hiring of community administrators is expected to begin next week, according to Ji Dongfeng.



Resident representatives vote for new members of their community's standing committee.

BQJ Photo

EDITOR: LIU FENG

DESIGNER: PANG LEI



# Curtain to Lift on Press, Publication Distribution

By Zhao Hongyi

Zhang Jicheng, director general of China National Publications Import and Export Corporation (CNPIEC) remained circumspect, but confident, when *Beijing Today* contacted him for an interview.

The topic was that China is to open its press and publication distribution to overseas investors as early as next month.

"We are not worried at all," was Zhang's first comment.

## Keeping promises

China promised on its entry to the World Trade Organization in December last year that it would open the press and publication distribution market in some cities on a trial basis one

year after the entry.

"China keeps its promise," said Liu Binjie, vice director of the General Administration for Press and Publishing, in an interview recently in Beijing, saying the first step will be carried out by the end of this year.

According to Liu, China will also, as promised, open the whole retailing market within three years, that is, by the end of 2004, and the whole sale market starting from the third year.

Within five years, all restrictions on the press and publication distribution business, either in the quantity of investment volume and the number of invested entities, business scope and the percentage of share holdings, will be

eliminated.

The first cities affected include Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Dalian, Qingdao, Zhengzhou and Wuhan, as well as the five special economic zones, namely Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, Xiamen and Hainan. All provincial and autonomous region capitals and other municipalities will come in the second round, according to Shi Zongyuan, director of the General Customs Administration.

## Domestic reforms under way

China's press and publication distribution market, which used to be controlled by the government, has been open to domestic private investors for many years. Over 57,000 privately-

owned bookstores and audio and video galleries exist in the country, four times the number of those owned by the government.

To prepare for the arrival of the competition, China has formed 38 press groups, seven publication groups, one periodicals group and five distribution groups.

"Our target is to restructure the entire industry and set up another 100, at least, press and publication groups in the next three to five years," said Liu.

## We're ready

Some foreign publication distribution groups have already established presence in China. Bertelsman arrived in Shanghai in 1995 and is operating an online bookstore, aside from a number of

publishing-related companies it set up for possible further market penetration.

CNPIEC is an example of the other side of the story.

CNPIEC is the largest distribution network in publication import and export in China, occupying 70 percent market share. The corporation has 32 branches within China and six overseas subsidiaries. Annual sales volume amounts to \$100 million.

As Zhang explained, "Foreign investors are interested in China's market. We have our focus. We can learn market exploration and management skills from them, and use their networks to sell our periodicals. The door is open, let's welcome the guests."

# Foreign Banks Get Wider RMB Access

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) announced Tuesday that foreign banks will be allowed to conduct Renminbi business in Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Qingdao, Nanjing and Wuhan from December 1 this year.

Six foreign banks are allowed to conduct such businesses. They are CitiBank, Bank One, Dresdner Bank AG, Raiffeisen Zentralbank Osterreich AG, Nanyang Commercial Bank and Development Bank of Singapore.

According to the announcement, foreign financial institutions in these cities can apply to the central bank to conduct Renminbi business starting from December.

A spokesman for the PBOC said this move followed China's promises related to its accession to the World Trade Organization.

When China officially joined

the WTO on December 11, 2001, it removed restrictions on the foreign exchange clients of foreign banks and allowed them to conduct RMB business in Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Dalian.

He said in the years ahead the market would gradually open, which would prove beneficial in improving China's banking capital structure, increasing the inflow of international capital, and introducing modern banking management theories.

According to statistics from the central bank, by the end of September this year, there were 181 foreign financial institutions in China, of which 45 had been given the green light over RMB. The total assets of foreign banks were valued at 47.797 billion yuan (about US \$ 5.78 billion), with an aggregate loan of 38.5 billion yuan.

(Xinhua)



The first rail link connecting Hainan Island with the mainland will open on December 28.

BQB Photo

# Internet Classroom Opens Up to Youngsters

By Lily Li

The Safety Internet Classroom in East Community of Babaoshan Street, Shijingshan District was launched Sunday morning, Beijing's first Internet cafe class for youngsters.

"We don't go to Internet cafes, because we know we can't resist so much unhealthy information from the Internet. But what should we do when we want to find materials helpful for our study from the Internet, read e-books or learn how to make homepages for our class?" says Wang Jingjuan, a student at Yongle No. 2 Middle School, who made a speech at the meeting.

In the next five years, Internet Classrooms with the uniform logo of the Communist Youth League will open in more than 200 communities around Beijing as experimental units.

"We will popularize this kind of Internet Cafe, setting up Internet Classrooms wherever there is a need," says Wang Junhui, secretary of the Communist Youth League of Shihingshan District.

Safety Internet Classrooms are a result of the Management Regulation for Business Sites on the Internet Service, put into practice as of November 15, which regulates that all Internet cafes should display clear signs declaring "Minors Forbidden" at the entrances.

Hu Zengyin, minister of the Department of Defending Young Peoples' Rights, appealed to the whole of society to pay attention to the problem of young persons surfing the Internet. "Opening a clean Internet for youngsters is a big and integrated project. We wish the whole society would help build more non-profit Internet Classrooms for youngsters."



Julia Nixon Eisenhower, daughter of former US President Richard Nixon visits the exhibition *Journeys to Peace and Cooperation* in Beijing on November 20. The exhibition commemorates the 30th anniversary of Nixon's history-making visit to China in 1972.

Xinhua Photo



The fifth version of the 5 yuan note and 0.5 yuan coin were issued nationwide on November 18.



Xinhua Photo

# Managing Human Resources Management

By Su Wei

With the introduction of systematic human resource management (HRM) in China in 2000, more Chinese enterprises have engaged in reforming or restructuring their HRM systems, hiring HRM professionals, consulting with international human resource companies to design and reform their current HRM system and making use of the Internet in their HRM activities.

Experts at the International Symposium on Human Resource Global Prospect - Challenges and Strategies for Human Resources after WTO Entry, held on November 15 at the Friendship Hotel, agreed that the transfer from traditional HRM to modern HRM is not merely a matter of changing ideas or conducting one or two reforms.

"Some enterprises are eager to learn everything relating to

HRM whenever they hear about new HRM concepts or practices adopted by other companies, but they seldom think about why there are such new concepts and practices and how their companies would benefit from them," says Dong Keyong, dean of the School of Public Administration of Renmin University.

In his example, he said some domestic enterprises have no idea why western enterprises make changes in their HRM from the job assessment system to the less stringent duty allocation and the salary system, but making efforts to promote "the duty based salary system" based on their understanding. Some enterprises mistakenly consider employee and management staff holding shares introduced from western countries as the key to solving personnel problems in Chinese enterprises. Others waste time and money "finding or creating

enterprise culture" to become more competitive upon knowing which is adopted in some western enterprises.

He suggested that the senior management staff should realize the significance of HRM in deciding enterprise operation strategies and the completion of their operational strategic goals.

He says the management staff, especially those dealing with HRM, should have systematic knowledge of HRM theories and framework, and understand the cooperative relation between HRM and enterprise operational strategies, in order to save time and energy in solving problems in HRM.

He also calls on the HRM staff to "leave their offices and have more contact with the ordinary employees," explaining that only in this way can problems such as labor force wastage and staff dissatisfaction be prevented from developing.

# Steel Anti-dumping Measures Extended

By Shan Jinliang

China says low priced imported steel has severely damaged the domestic steel industry and announced the extension of temporary steel safeguard measures to three years.

It is the country's first action on such matters taken since China was granted World Trade Organization (WTO) membership last year. The safeguard measures will be extended to May 23, 2005.

The policy says imported steel that exceeds the quota will attract an average of 22 percent extra tariffs, with the highest extra tariff set at 23.2 percent. China's listed steel producers say the measures will better protect the national steel industry and set restrictions on the steel imports. Industry experts say the measures will help the steel industry upgrade itself.

The temporary safeguard measures were taken in response to US steel tariffs of eight to thirty percent initiated in March, which triggered a new round of trade protectionism in the steel industry around the world.

An official from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation who requested anonymity, said China is a big consumer of steel and the steel safeguard measures of the US and EU have restrained China's steel exports.

The measures have aroused attention from the steel industry and related industries, such as the auto industry. According to an official from the Capital Steel Corporation, none of the listed five categories of steel are produced by his company, but they will affect other big steel producers, as they have a large production ability on these. Zhong Shi, an auto industry expert said since automakers usually sign long-term contracts with steel producers, and steel producers would fear the price jump will scare away their clients, they will not lead to a rise in auto prices in the short term.

# Fewer Students Trying for Top Business Schools

By Ema Ma

The number of applicants to China's top two business schools at Beijing and Tsinghua, fell from 3,390 and 4,500 last year to 2000 and 3000 respectively this year. The lower number is mainly due to the lower acceptance rate of the two schools last year, according to the State MBA Education Committee.

In 2001, 1500 applicants to Tsinghua satisfied the minimum scores for the waiting list, but only 480 candidates received offers. At Beijing University, the acceptance rate is only 13 to 1. As there is no systematic ranking for the top business schools in China, many applicants make their choices based on the schools' celebrity. This results in a disproportionate number of applications for Beijing and Tsinghua, which together account for almost 20 percent of the total.

The total number of applicants may not decrease this year, as for some schools, such as Beijing's North Jiaotong University, applications rose from 500 to over 800. This indicates that the students may be making more rational choices. Some international top-level business schools have expanded enrollment plans in China, which has also diverted some students.

# Star Alliance Arrives in China

By Hou Mingxin

The biggest airline union in the world, Star Alliance, unveiled its Round-the-World program in Shanghai last week. According to the program, if you travel with a Star Alliance member airline and start in Beijing or Shanghai, you can fly around the world for 20,000 yuan.

The Round-the-World fares are available in first, business economy classes, and range from 19,640 to 73,170 yuan, depending on the origin and class of service.

At present there are eight Star Alliance member airlines in China, all operating programs independently. They are: Air Canada, All Nippon Airways, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines System, Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways International, and United Airlines.



# Donglin Answers Back to EU Anti-dumping Charge

By Shan Jinliang

Donglin Electronics from Xiamen, Fujian Province became China's only company to stand up to the EU's latest charges of dumping last week. In October, the EU contacted more than 1,000 Chinese companies it accuses of dumping light bulbs, saying it wanted to investigate them and giving them until November 19 to accept before slapping mighty tariff charges on their products. Donglin proudly stood up and accepted the new investigation.

China's light bulb industry incurred the wrath of the EU two years ago when three international light bulb producers including Philips and Osram Sylvania, a subsidiary of Siemens, applied to the EU Commission to conduct anti-dumping measures against Chinese light bulb exporters.

Around 50 domestic light bulb makers accepted the EU's investigation last year but only one wound up being exempted from the 66.1 percent anti-dumping



Jia Qiang, chairman of Donglin  
Photo by Wang Yiwie

tax levied by the EU.

Donglin invited 50 local and national news organizations to a press conference last Saturday to review its response to the latest lawsuit from the EU, which again was instigated at the request of Osram Sylvania. In an open letter to the EU, the company proclaimed its innocence and questioned the EU's judgment in

this matter. "We do not receive any government subsidies and have no reason to dump products with prices lower than costs," said the letter.

Jia Qiang, chairman of Donglin, said the commission would reply in around two weeks, but the whole investigation procedure could last a year.

Concerning why most companies have not responded to the EU demands, Jia said they might be concerned at making the situation worse. The re-investigation will be intended to deepen the penalty on Chinese light bulb products, many of whom probably think the best result would be to keep the current tariff of 66.1 percent.

Jia said the company would try to win support from the media and the public, as this could put pressure on Osram Sylvania. Considering its interests in China, Osram might then withdraw its lawsuit.

A report in *Jiefang Daily* suggested the slew of recent anti-

dumping cases from the EU and US were nothing more than protectionism, born of their slowing economies. The feeling in China is that the mounting number of dumping charges result mainly from Western countries' inability to realistically calculate actual production costs of products manufactured in China.

Since labor costs in China are much lower than in developed countries, products made in China are far cheaper. What's more, since China's productivity in this area is growing faster than market demand, companies have to boost their exports by means of price cuts.

On the rising anti-dumping cases from overseas, Xue Rongjiu, head of the WTO Society of China, suggests Chinese companies should be active in facing anti-dumping cases from abroad. He also warned, "It would be foolish for Chinese companies to rely on price cuts in selling their products overseas, without improving technology and quality."



Checking his share prices? Sohu CEO Charles Zhang. Photo provided by Sohu

## Chinese Websites Recover Their Poise

By Zhao Hongyi

For the three Chinese web portals, Sina.com, Sohu.com and NetEase.com, 2002 marks a pleasant, if not exactly happy, year, since the three companies' shares listed on Nasdaq are gradually recovering from last year's hammering.

Since the beginning of this year, the three companies' share prices have increased by 7 times on average. On November 19, Sina's price closed at \$4.05 per share, Sohu at \$6.00, and NetEase at \$9.17, a really dramatic increase from the de-listing faced by the company earlier this year.

Analysts believe the recovery of China-based Internet companies' shares reveals the confidence of global investors in the country's Internet economy, as well as China's economic prospects as a whole.

Earlier this month, all the three companies reported increases in revenues.

For the third quarter this year, Sohu reported profits of \$112,000, while Sina reported revenue of \$10.3 million and profits of \$241,000 and Netease had revenue of \$9 million and profits of \$3.1 million.

Local IT industry observers seem to have re-discovered their optimism.

"The recent share price recovery is a timely return to health for these companies," says Lu Weigang, a local IT industry analyst.

Lu Benfu, director of the Internet Industrial R&D Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, says China's IT industry has learnt a lot from the burst bubbles in the US IT industry and have found their own methods of making money.

"This is because China still had limited investment in IT at the height of the Internet boom, so it was not so exposed as the US."

Now Chinese companies are stepping to the central stage of Nasdaq, declared Lu.

Sohu.com's PR manager Wang Bin said the company had turned round its results by developing a new strategy. Sohu used to promote a wide range of new concepts of Internet services to domestic customers, which made it fashionable in the IT industry. Entering 2002, Sohu started focusing on business operation, targeting two groups for its profits: corporate customers and individual consumers.

## Local Furniture Companies Shape Up to Face Foreign Giants

By Shan Jinliang

Shanghai-based Red Star Furniture Group, which claims to be the No. 1 furniture and fittings producer in China, announced on Monday the opening of its flagship store, Macalline International Furniture & Fittings Square, in Fengtai District on December 30.

The 100,000-square-meter store will be the largest furniture store in Beijing, according to the company. But Red Star is just one of around ten furniture and fittings companies which are planning to open big new emporiums in Beijing by the end of the year.

Industry insiders say this expansion by domestic furniture companies is intended to preempt the arrival in the domestic market of big international companies such as Auchan Group from France, OBI from Germany and B&Q from Great Britain who will come to Beijing early next year.

Homemart, another Shanghai-based domestic fittings company, will open its second store in Xisanqi on November 30, following the opening of its first store in Haidian District. Other industry newcomers such as Tianjin-based Home World and Jilin-based Orient Home will establish new stores before the New Year.

There are more than 300 furniture and fittings shops in Beijing, and they can be divided into three types: foreign furniture markets like IKEA, furniture distributing centers such as Juran and chain store supermar-

kets like Orient Home. The biggest advantage for the foreign companies lies in their impressive shopping environment and their finely designed and high-grade furniture. The furniture distributing centers provide all kinds of furniture products with relatively modest prices but suffer from a poor shopping environment, and the chain stores have only lower grade products.

Other industry players such as Shenzhen-based Jinhaima (Gold Sea Horse) Furniture and Homemart have sharpened up their act in anticipation of the foreign invasion. They've developed the chain business model in their Beijing branches and begun to broaden their customer base. When Jinhaima opened its first store on the west fourth ring road last February, it took advantage of its powerful purchasing network to institute price cuts weapon and undercut local rivals.

However, domestic furniture companies still see foreign competition as the biggest danger. According to Beijing Homemart General Manager Chen Defeng, the local outlets of international domestic fittings companies are just a small part of the threat. With a global purchasing network to ensure low prices and running by means of franchising, foreign companies like IKEA can provide cheaper and better furniture and gain high profits.

Local companies hope their low product prices and a wide understanding of the domestic market can stem the tide.



Beijing Hyundai Auto Corp. launched its car production line on Monday by presenting its new Sonata. The Sonata will go on sale for 200,000 yuan on December 12, and 2,000 cars will roll off the assembly line by the end of year.

Photo by Hua Xicheng

## Honda Breaks the 50% Limit

By Ema Ma

Guangzhou Automobile Export Base, the proposed joint venture involving Honda, Dongfeng Motor Corp. and Guangzhou Auto Group, has obtained government approval and Honda will hold a majority stake of over 50 percent.

This is the first time a foreign company has been allowed to take a majority shareholding in an auto JV. This special approval is based on the condition that all the company's products will be exported. The initial annual production capacity of the company will be 50,000 small cars.

"This is a turning point in China's auto industry," said Feng Fei, deputy minister of the R&D (Research and Development) Center for industry study under the State Council.

Since the normalization of bilateral trade between Japan and China, the investment strategy of Japanese auto enterprises has focused on exports to China. Japan's auto industry had devoted its energies to the America market in the 80s.

Given the saturation in the North American and European car markets, it is understandable that foreign auto-makers are flocking to China. The Chinese auto market is currently growing by 20 percent a year and is expected to continue expanding rapidly.

Japan wavered a long time before committing itself to the Chinese market, allowing rivals like Volkswagen to seize market share. In order to retake the lost territory and avoid the ever-increasing labor costs in Japan, manufacturers like Honda have decided to move their production bases to this once neglected market. The transformation is profound this time: the cars produced at these plants will no longer just have tags, saying "made in Japan". This time, they are localized enterprises, accepted by local people.

## Bankrolling China's New Wheels

By Ema Ma

Purchase a car in a bank? It may seem a little unlikely, but you can enjoy the latest in one-stop auto financing service at China Minsheng Bank, Xibah branch, from November 8.

While dealing with their bank business, customers can also obtain information on newly-released automobiles. They can even sign a contract on the spot to pay for a car with a bank loan if they choose. "Through simplifying the procedure, we can shorten the loan approval cycle from seven to ten days to only three days," says Wang Hui, manager of the Personal Business Division from the bank.

At present, private vehicle consumption in China is growing by about 20 percent each year. General Motors believes demand for cars in China will soon start to grow at 33 percent a year. A recent survey indicated that 70 percent of the families in China's major cities will have the budget to purchase their own cars within five to 10 years. China is expected to become the third biggest auto consumption market after the U.S. and Japan by 2010.

So it's boom time, right? Well, not for all sectors of the auto market.

In a mature auto market, such as North America, 85 percent of sales are backed by loans, and even in undeveloped areas like India, credit sales reach 65 percent. However, the figure in China is around 15 percent.

In order to catch up in this lucrative market, banks have started trying new measures, such as decreasing the lending rate and the down payment, extending the loan period, and now even utilizing banks as auto exhibition halls.

The problem is the weak credit system in China. The lack of personal credit records means banks have to make the credit requirements ever more flexible. Setting up a sound personal credit system is a gradual process, however. But the new cooperation between banks and car companies could help solve the problem. Based on a thorough risk control system, professional finance companies have the ability to extend loans directly, therefore avoiding unnecessary bureaucratic procedures.

Foreign auto magnates have been milking this market for a long time. "Now, all China needs is the announcement of a specific policy on this," says Mr. Zhan, Chief Rep. of the Ford Credit Co., Beijing Representative Office.



# BBC, Reuters Cut Jobs and Costs

Reuters Beijing office says notice not received yet

LONDON, Nov. 17 (The Guardian) - The BBC is being forced to cut costs and lay off staff because of a 200 million pound sterling budget shortfall. Some departments have been told to impose recruitment freezes. An email is already circulating among news staff calling for voluntary redundancies. One source claimed that even more radical action is being considered. (Ian Griffiths)

**Reuters Cuts 60 Editorial Jobs**

LONDON, Nov. 15 (AP) - Reuters Group PLC, the global news and financial information company, said it plans to cut between two and three percent of its editorial division.



BBC's headquarter in London

AP Photo

The cuts, amounting to about 60 jobs in an editorial work force of 2,500, will be in different centers around the world, said company spokesman Peter Thomas.

**Reuters Cuts 150 Jobs in North America**

NEW YORK, Nov. 14 - Reuters PLC said Thursday it is cutting 150 jobs across its North American operations as part of an ongoing effort to control expenses in a difficult economic environment.

The company confirmed that it is eliminating its Japan desk in New York.

In June, Reuters said it was eliminating 650 management jobs globally. Prior to that, it had shed 1,800 jobs.

## Analysts' Take:

**Li Ning, HR official, Reuters Beijing Office**

Up till today, we have not received any notice from our headquarters.

Clearly, the 60 job cut in the editorial division are relevant to all branches around the world.

Reuters employs nearly 200 people in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, of which, over 100 are stationed in Beijing. China is an emerging power, both politically and economically, so there should be no job cuts here, at least for the time being.

**Wang Jun, researcher, News and Media Research Center,**

**Beijing University**

Reuters and BBC are not alone in confronting problems of falling incomes and rising costs.

BusinessWeek and Forbes confirmed this week they have laid off 21 employees, or 3.72 percent of their total work force, to further reduce costs in the aftermath of a record advertising slump.

Last week, Dow Jones cut 23 jobs at the Wall Street Journal, and another 230 jobs globally, or about three percent of its work force.

The economic downturn, leading to decreasing incomes from both subscriptions and advertising, is the major cause of the slump.

The media industry has to undergo an overall structural adjustment to meet these challenges.

Reuters conducted an internal reform last year, accompanied by large-scale job cuts, and is now relying more on its website for sales and releasing news. This has enabled it to reduce the size of its administrative staff and mid-level management team, allowing it to put more resources towards covering and analyzing news.

## WorldCom CEO Stresses Restoring Trust

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 20 (Reuters) - WorldCom's new CEO Michael Capellas said that his biggest challenge will be restoring the public's confidence in the bankrupt telecom company.

He pledged to lead the company out of bankruptcy without selling off huge chunks of assets.

Capellas, 48, comes to WorldCom after wrestling with another knotty business challenge: serving as president of Hewlett-Packard Co. after its \$19 billion acquisition of Compaq Computer Corp. He had been Compaq's boss for nearly three years.

(Elinor Mills Abreu & Brian Bergstein)



Michael Capellas

## IBM Plans to Spend More on Services

ARMONK, N.Y. Nov. 20 (Wall Street Journal) - In an unusual change of priorities, International Business Machines Corp. said Wednesday it plans to shift \$1 billion of its research-and-development budget away from traditional information technology over the next three years, focusing it instead on research related to consulting and computer services.

The shift reflects the growing importance of computer services at IBM and in the computer industry. Consulting and services are expected to make up nearly half of its revenue next year, IBM believes.

(William M. Bulkeley)

## AOL Testing Internet Service in China

HONG KONG, Nov. 12 (Reuters) - Internet giant AOL has quietly begun testing a pay Internet service in China since last August, more than a year after first announcing the plan.

The company's joint venture with China's biggest personal computer maker, Legend Group Ltd., is running trials in about three dozen Chinese cities.

Legend Chief Executive Yang Yuanqing said the venture, named FlyingDragon, would be launched when the market was ready, probably within a year.

The Legend venture is AOL's third dial-up service in the Asia-Pacific region, with the other two located in Japan and Australia.

AOL's earliest dial-up venture in China, a Hong Kong-based pay service with Chinadotcom Corp. lasted about two years before it closed down in June 2001.

(Doug Young)



## Here Come New Dreams

Architect David Childs speaks next to a model of a new 7 World Trade Center tower during an unveiling of development plans for the building at the World Trade Center site in New York, on November 20.

The new 52-story tower will be built on the site of the old 7 World Trade Center, which collapsed following the September 11, 2001, attacks.

The 1.6-million-square-foot office tower, scheduled to open in late 2005, has been designed with enhanced safety provisions, including sturdier fire proofing than is required by the current building code, and wider stairs for rapid evacuation.

(Reuters Photo)



The opening ceremony of the Boao Forum of the Asia Tourism Conference held this week at the Guilin International Conference and Exhibition Center in Guangxi province.

## China to Work with Other Asian Countries to Develop Tourism

GUILIN, Guangxi, Nov. 19 (Xinhua) - China will cooperate with the other Asian countries to develop transnational and transregional tourism products such as cross-border tours in the Mekong River area and along the Silk Road throughout the Eurasian Continent, said China's tourism chief He Guangwei.

"China hopes to carry out cooperation and exchange information with other countries to share prosperity," He, director of China's National Tourism Administration, said at the Asian tourism minister meeting during the Boao Forum of the Asia-Tourism Conference this week.

**Chinese Media Reports:**

**Kerstin Leitner, resident representative, United Nations Development Program**

Tourism development should be combined with poverty alleviation.

China is facing an increase in its labor

force and a structural change in the labor market. In some estimates, the number of foreign tourists that come to China will increase four times over the next five years, opening room for 13 to 14 million jobs in the tourism industry and related sectors.

**Nirmal Andrews, regional director, United Nations Environment Program**

We should pay attention to sustainable development in terms of traditional culture preservation and the environment, bio-diversification in particular, in exploring resources for the tourism industry.

**Trevor Sofield, professor, University of Tasmania, Australia**

Governments should pay attention to the utilization of labor forces and raising efficiency in their designs for tourism development initiatives.

Meanwhile, we should avoid imbalances in the distribution of income from tourism, a common issue facing the whole world.

## US, Singapore to Sign FTA Early Next Year

SINGAPORE, Nov. 19 (Dow Jones Newswires) - The US and Singapore concluded another round of free trade talks on Tuesday, but failed to agree on terms relating to transfer of capital during a crisis, officials said.

A final deal is to be concluded by the year's end. The two countries could sign a landmark pact early next year.

The deal is expected to be a model for potential free trade deals between the US and other countries in the region.

**Analysts' Take:**

**Chen Fengying, section chief, Division for World Economic Studies, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations**

Three economic factors are behind the rising tide of bilateral free trade arrangements.

First, multilateral arrangements, as represented by the WTO framework, do not work effectively.

Second, the economic downturn is forcing countries to set up arrangements as a way out of trouble.

Third, bilateral arrangements are relatively easy to draft and handle.

China's free trade agreement

with ASEAN, which starts in 2010, has provoked a new round of bilateral free trade negotiations in the region, such as those between Japan and ASEAN, US and Australia, and Singapore and Taiwan. Surely, the US' next target is ASEAN.

In the meantime, I want to warn that a comprehensive trade war between the US and China is inevitable in the next decade. It is more a result of political reasons than economic factors.

**Liang Yanfeng, Institute of World Trade and Economic Cooperation, Chinese Academy of International Business and Economics**

Bilateral trade arrangements have become normal and common practices in the last two decades.

Bilateral arrangements are necessary when multilateral agreements cannot be reached.

WTO regulations stipulate that bilateral agreements should not impose any threat to multilateral arrangements and agreements.

China needs to keep a close eye on the development of such bilateral free trade arrangements on top of WTO agreements, because bilateral free trade arrangements are more useful and easy to operate in times of economic slowdown and recession.



New York Stock Exchange Chairman Richard Grasso and China Telecom's Vice President Li Ping launch trading of Beijing-based China Telecom on the stock exchange last Thursday.

## China Telecom's Delayed IPO Falls

NEW YORK, Nov. 14 (Dow Jones Newswires) - After its launch was postponed late last month for lack of investor interest, the initial public offering of China Telecom's stock finally traded Thursday in New York. American depositary receipts for the fixed-line telephone operator eased 5.4 percent from the \$18.98 offering price to close at \$17.96 in New York Stock Exchange trading after trading as low at \$17.50.

Friday in Hong Kong, China Telecom closed at HK\$1.45 (19 US cents), down from its initial public offering price of HK\$1.48 a share.

"The market environment is adverse," Said Tim Love, head of emerging markets equity strategy at Deutsche Bank in London.

(Charles Roth and John Ryan)



Tennis champions Serena Williams (L), and her sister Venus (R), serve children at a McDonald's in New York's Times Square to kickoff World Children's Day on Wednesday, Nov. 20. The event was part of one day of global fundraising activities for Ronald McDonald House Charities and other children's causes around the world.

(AP Photo)



# Returned to Sender

By Xinli/Ivy Zhang

The long-lost wallet of a Shenzhen factory worker was finally returned to its owner recently, thanks to the honesty of an American woman and the help of the Chinese media.

Early this month, *Beijing Youth Daily* received a call from a reader named Hao Weizhen, whose daughter had just returned from the United States. The daughter brought with her a wallet, found in a gift box in 1993, by her American colleague Tammy Lourenco.

"Tammy was unable to tell the value of the wallet. She did not even know it is from China. But she feels it must be very important to the owner. Thus she kept it till now," Hao told *Beijing Youth Daily*.

The gift box in which the wallet was found was made in China. The wallet contained 23 yuan, two messages, two receipts and five photos of a Chinese girl.

Hao's daughter, Annie Chan worked in the same company as Lourenco, who told her how she had found it and that she knew it must belong to a Chinese person.

On November 6, *Beijing Youth Daily* covered the story with a photo showing the contents of the wallet.



Photos, messages and money found in the wallet.

Photo by Cao Boyuan

Five days later, a reporter from a Guangdong newspaper, *Lianzhou News*, found the owner, Zhong Jilian, in a village near Lianzhou.

According to Zhong, she came to Shenzhen

at the age of 15 to make money to help support her family.

She worked for a while at the Tongcheng Electronics Factory, as a packer. It was there she lost her wallet.

Zhong said the photos in the wallet were meant to be mailed back to her hometown for her identification card. After losing the wallet, she had to retake photos. Zhong is now a mother, living in Lianzhou.

"Yes. It is me in the photo. The wallet is mine. I want to thank the American girl who kept it over so many years." The wallet was mailed to Zhong by express post last week.

Learning that the wallet had been returned to its owner, Lourenco sent an email to *Beijing Youth Daily*. "I never thought that it would turn out this way," it reads. "This whole story is very exciting and a miracle. I hope I made Jilian very happy."

Lourenco also attached a letter addressed to Zhong. It reads, "It is amazing that we found you in such a big population as China. I still have the box that the Christmas gift came in. That's when your wallet fell out as I opened this gift. When I open that box with my Disney Christmas Ladder I will always think of this story."



Xu Bin walks down a street in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, sporting a bald head and an optimistic notice on his jacket. It reads, "Put your ad on my head." In the past two weeks, he has rented his head to two customers at the cost of 200 to 300 yuan a day.

Photo by Zhan Xiaodong

## Whose Book?

By Su Wei

After four months of fruitless talks, a Beijing publishing house is taking legal action against a publisher based in Inner Mongolia over a copyright dispute.

Over 94 percent of the 827 pictures in the *Selection of Colored Illustrations of Compendium of Materia Medica* are identical to those in *An Illustrated Catalogue of Compendium of Materia Medica*.

The former was published by the Inner Mongolia Culture Publishing House in March this year and the later was published four years ago by Beijing Hua Xia Publishing House.

Shen Liansheng, a retired professor of Beijing Chinese Medicine University and the compiler of the original catalogue, says he was shocked when he picked up the *Selection* in a bookstore near the university in July this year.

"There are no sources given for the pictures, except the name of the chief editor — Hu Yan," says Shen. Shen spent over ten years taking photos of plants, animals and minerals for the over 1,500 medicines recorded in the compendium.

Wei Yunpeng, director of the copyright department of Hua Xia, says the president of the Inner Mongolia Culture Publishing House, Wu Jili, did not deny that the *Selection* was published by them when Wei first phoned him. "But he said he needed to check the details."

Wei says one week later when he called Wu again, no one answered the phone. "I then called other departments. The replies were always the same — 'Wu is responsible. Call him again.'"

Three weeks ago, Wei says Wu paid a sudden visit during a business trip to Beijing. "We preferred consultation. It is the best choice, especially for the economic compensation," says he, "Although we know they have no sincerity, we agreed to discuss with them first."

During the discussion, Hua Xia insisted Inner Mongolia Culture Publishing House stop selling the *Selection*, pay compensation for economic loss incurred and apologize publicly to Hua Xia and Shen.

Wu has so far refused to comment on the matter. Office director of the Inner Mongolia publishing house Gao Tianshui told *Beijing Today* they are discussing how to solve the matter after making an apology. "Hua Xia and us agreed not to take any interviews on the issue. It is a commercial secret."

## Mission Impossible

By Chen Ying/Hu Hongyun

Although Spring Wedding Photo agreed to retake Liu Chuntiao and her husband's wedding photos, the couple did not get around to taking advantage of the offer before their short-lived marriage ended in divorce.

Liu is now suing the company over their refusal to refund the almost 1,700 yuan fee.

In November 2001, Liu and her husband went to Spring Wedding Photo's studio to have their wedding photos taken after signing a contract with the company.

Liu was disappointed with the

proofs when she returned four days later and requested a refund. After negotiation, the company agreed to retake the photos.

However the couple never returned, and in September this year, they filed for divorce.

During the past two months, Liu, accompanied by her relatives, has visited the company several times, seeking to have her payment refunded.

"Because the contract was terminated for reasons beyond my control, it's reasonable to get my money back," maintains Liu.

## Vegetables' Right to Light

By Ma Boyun/Ivy Zhang

A line of poplar trees along the dividing line between neighboring farm plots brought two Beijing farmers to court recently.

The farmer on the shady side claimed the shadow cast by the trees had stunted the growth of his cabbages, causing him financial loss.

Two farmers, Yang Tingsong and Cao Mingxiang, live in Yangtuo village, east of Beijing. They each farm 0.06 hectares, growing cucumbers, tomatoes, cabbage and corn.

Cao planted poplars along the border last April and May, with the plan of selling them when they ma-



Farmer Yang Tingsong grieves over his cabbage damaged by the poplar trees.

Photo by Ma Boyun

have affected the growth of Yang's vegetables to a certain extent and agreed he should compensate Yang.

The court ruled in favor of Yang, requiring Cao to pay him 500 yuan in compensation for the loss incurred.

## Sexual Discrimination

By Su Wei

After being kicked out of university for their "abominable behavior and moral degeneracy," two students are lodging a lawsuit against the university for infringing on their privacy.

Li Jing, a 20-year-old Beijinger is enrolled at the College of Law and Economics at Chongqing Post and Telecommunications University.

She and her boyfriend, Li Jun, a fellow student, spent the night at a hotel in September during their summer vacation trip this year.

On October 1, Li Jing went to the school hospital complaining of a stomachache and was diagnosed with an extra-uterine pregnancy.

She then had an abortion at a local hospital. Upon returning to classes, she was told she and her boyfriend would be subject to disciplinary action.

She was to be placed on probation, while Li Jun was to be requested to leave.

According to Li Jing, it was the school hospital that informed her department about her pregnancy, and most of her fellow students also know about it.

Li Jing says two days later, she was asked to write "a profound self-criticism, detailing time, place and frequency, and to admit to being guilty of abominable behavior and moral degeneracy." Li Jun says he was threatened, and ordered to

write a similar self-criticism.

On October 30, the university ordered the expulsion of both students, saying they had violated the schools' rules by living together in a hotel and having an improper sexual relationship.

Wei Gang, a staff member of the principal's office, told *Beijing Today* the school had done nothing illegal in meting out such punishments.

According to the university, the behavior of the two students violated the code set by State Education Commission, which says "students who by their abominable behavior and moral degeneracy violate schools' regulation to a severe degree, can be requested to leave."

A separate clause says, "students guilty of improper sexual behavior may be placed on probation, requested to leave, or even expelled."

The two students maintain that their behavior does not constitute "abominable behavior and moral degeneracy," and that their sexual relations resulted from a normal love between a man and a woman.

They consider that as adults, university students should enjoy the basic rights of human beings, which include the right to have sex with a consenting partner, without the interference of any third party.

They argue that the university has infringed on their privacy, insulted them, and damaged their reputations.

## Fertilizer from Leaves

By Chen Ying

Some 1,000 metric tons of autumn leaves have been dumped at Nangong Composting Plant since the beginning of November, when the factory offered to give away fertilizer made from the recycled leaves in exchange for leaves.

The plant, in Daxing District, is the only factory in Beijing capable of turning leaves into fertilizer.

Since local media started publicizing Nangong's offer, a steady stream of leaves have been delivered to the plant. The factory will even send its own vehicles to collect the leaves

if the would-be supplier does not have the means to deliver them. The supplier just needs to pay the transportation fee.

How to dispose of autumn leaves has long posed a problem for locals. Burning piles of leaves used to be a common sight at this time of year, but nowadays, such methods of disposal are forbidden in urban areas, for the sake of environmental protection.

Many parks and companies have sent their leaves to the factory. "There isn't a deadline. People can send leaves to the factory any time," said factory spokesperson Gao Mingde.



Tsinghua University students work on their computers in the library.

Photo by Wang Qifei

## Online in the Library

By Lily Li

More and more Tsinghua University students are going to the library to study these days with a notebook PC, instead of the traditional notebook.

Groups of students were stooping over their notebook PCs at the library Tuesday morning, reading books online.

"When I find a book I want to read, I tell the librarian via the internet. And then I can download it from the library's web page, www.lib.tsinghua.edu.cn," says Wang Yu, a senior student, "the articles are more helpful when they can be copied and edited in my own computer."

Many students say their notebook PCs are indispensable for their study. According to

Wang Xing, a worker in the library, it is the responsibility of the library to offer a good environment for students to study.

"Our library has about 50 computer terminals, each can provide power to six notebook PCs," says Wang.

"Also, students needn't worry about network connections to surf internet," he says. The library uses wireless networking; all students need is a plug-in card, which can be borrowed from the library for free.

"From the first network laboratory to the perfect local area network, from the World Wide Web to broadband, Tsinghua University's network hardware is always the very best," boasted a teacher surnamed Shi in the library.



# Try This On for Size

## New traffic bureau regulation to put all taxi drivers in uniforms

By Chen Ying

First, *miandi*, or breadbox, taxis were taken from the road and compacted. Then cab drivers were told they will have to memorize a few hundred phrases of English before the 2008 Olympics. And now, while the taxi industry awaits expected legislation that will get all Xiali cabs off the street, drivers have to deal with a new change — a dress code.

At the beginning of this month, a new regulation issued by the Beijing Traffic Bureau stating "taxi drivers should wear uniforms when they work" went into effect. The rule is intended to improve the images of drivers and taxi companies, and to add to the changing look of the city in preparation for the Olympics.

The regulation stipulates that all private taxi drivers and drivers for companies should wear seasonal uniforms, but the costs must be absorbed by the companies and drivers. Moreover, both companies and private cabbies must register their uniform styles and colors with their home district's traffic administrations.

The penalties for failing to meet this dress code are harsh. Taxi drivers found out of uniform can get slapped with fines from 500 yuan to 1,000 yuan for first offenses, while repeat transgressors and drivers with poor records can be fined up to 2,000 yuan. In the most severe cases, un-uniformed drivers can have their licenses suspended for one to three months.

To put this in perspective, according to the website of the Beijing Public Security Bureau of Traffic Administration, the fine for parking illegally is 200 yuan and six points out of the annual twelve on driv-



Zheng Xin, employee of Beijing Beifang Taxi Company, in a newly-designed uniform

Photo by Chen Xiaohong

ers' licenses, while the fine for driving intoxicated is also 200 yuan, plus a full 12 points. Drivers that do not wear their uniforms will only face monetary penalties, they will not be charged points against their licenses.

Beijing is not the first city in China to implement this kind of regulation. Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, has had a uniform code for taxi drivers for years. In Tianjin, all drivers had to wear gray-blue shirts and ties during the Labor Day holiday of May 1 to 7 this year. Those that refuse will be punished.

Local taxi companies are scrambling to respond to the rule and designing uniforms.

Since 2000, Beijing Beifang Taxi Company has been one of the few companies to make its employees wear uniforms — blue shirts in the summer and plain pantsuits in other seasons. The company is now putting together uniform jackets for drivers to keep up with the new rule.

Is taxi drivers' attire enough of an issue to justify this new regulation? How will this impact drivers and passengers? Opinions follow:

### Song Zhigang, driving coach

If I were a taxi driver, I would not go along with this regulation. This is an extra burden for private drivers.

These days it's getting harder and harder for cabbies to make money. Most of them have relatively low education levels, and driving taxis is about their only way to earn a living. It would make more sense and look more natural to simply let them wear everyday clothes.

### Xu Gaoping, taxi driver, Yinjian Taxi Company

This regulation is not so bad. On the whole, making drivers wear uniforms will help the taxi industry give a good impression to tourists from other provinces or foreign countries. It's similar to doctors having to wear white smocks or construction work-

ers wearing safety helmets at building sites. I think this is reasonable and not an inconvenience.

### Jin Zhiqiang, taxi driver

I would rather wear my own clothes. There have been so many regulations concerning taxi drivers. But we are the only ones who really know how hard it is to make a living in this business. My days are generally tedious, and I have little time to relax or have fun. I think most taxi drivers are the same.

As a driver, I spend most of my time everyday in the same little space. So, if I have to wear a uniform, when am I going to be able to put on my own clothes? I especially think it's ridiculous that the penalties for not wearing uniforms are higher than the fines for most traffic violations.

### Kin Ji-Su, Korean

In my country, there aren't any regulations that taxi drivers should wear uniforms, but some companies go ahead and have their own rules along that line. It's generally a good idea, and can help avoid some problems. For example, passengers might be reassured to see their drivers in uniforms if they are taking cabs at night.

### Gulya's Anett, Hungarian

I don't think there is a direct relationship between taxis and uniforms. There is no reason to be so particular about what drivers wear. Certainly, drivers should dress acceptably, but what exactly they wear is more a personal matter.

In my country, taxi drivers wear what they want. For me, what cabbies are wearing is not a reason to take or not to take a taxi. The only thing I care about is can they get me where I want to go safely and on time.

### SOUND BITES

"You don't raise fees earlier, you don't raise them later but you rush to raise them around the time of the 16th Party Congress."

— Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, criticizing China Telecom and Chinese telecom officials for long distance fee hikes, which he said he learned about through Hong Kong newspapers while attending an ASEAN meeting in Cambodia

"We hope that the sunken part does not spill its fuel. But still it's a time bomb at the bottom of the sea. There's nothing that makes us believe it won't finally burst and leak all its oil."

— Maria Jose Caballero, head of Greenpeace's coastal protection project in Spain, after the Bahamas-flagged Prestige tanker ruptured in stormy weather November 13, initially spilling about 800,000 gallons of fuel oil along a 125-mile stretch of the Iberian peninsula and dumping another 800,000 gallons of fuel into the Atlantic Ocean on Tuesday

"It was rather bizarre, what he did. But Michael's a bizarre person."

— Joerg Diestel, 17, from Berlin after European media scolded Michael Jackson on Wednesday for endangering his young son by hanging him over a fourth-floor balcony railing at a Berlin hotel

"If Yao Ming ever gets 19 points in a game, I'll kiss Kenny's [posterior] right here on TV."

— Charles Barkley, former NBA star and current host of TNT's NBA studio show, making a bet with colleague Kenny Smith before the Houston Rocket's Yao shot 9-for-9 in scoring a career-high 20 points, and also had six rebounds in 23 minutes Sunday night to help the Rockets beat the Los Angeles Lakers 93-89

By Chen Ying

# No More Breaks for Commuters

By Lily Li

Cantonese commuters were shocked last week when the Guangzhou No.1 Bus Company appealed to the city's transportation bureau to cancel monthly bus tickets, which have been issued for more than 30 years. The request is being investigated, and follows the 1996 cancellation of monthly bus tickets in Shanghai and the recent passage of a similar policy in Nanjing, which will take effect on December 1.

The main reasons given by the bus company for the move are the heavy losses incurred by issuing the cut-rate monthly tickets, which the company added are holding back the development of the city's public transportation system. Guangzhou No. 1 Bus Company also said that monthly tickets are issued at the expense of other citizens, most of whom support the move to cancel commuter tickets.

"Canceling monthly commuter tickets and carrying out other reforms can benefit bus companies, which in turn will lead to improvements of roads and public transportation," said Mr. Wang, an employee at the Guangzhou No.1 Bus Company who only gave his surname.

Monthly bus tickets have long been considered a nearly indispensable form of transportation subsidy in Beijing and other cities. In 2001, a total of 17,670,000 such tickets were sold in Beijing.

The tickets come in four versions: general, special-line, student and suburban commuter tickets.

However, the Beijing Traffic Bureau has not indicated whether it will support the plan or not. A bureau spokesman who requested anonymity said, "plans should be considered very carefully because this issue involves citizens' benefits."

Has the era of subsidized bus riding passed? Will increasing fees help shore up bus companies running in the red and improve traffic? Opinions follow:

### Zhang Yixuan, first-year graduate student at the School of Journalism and Communication of Beijing University, monthly ticket holder

Without commuter tickets, my monthly transportation fees would jump to at least 100 yuan, no small amount for me. And, I think there are lots of people in the same boat.

Monthly tickets shouldn't be cancelled. Instead, they should be able to be used on more routes and buses. A hike in prices would be OK.

I admit the monthly ticket system can create some trouble. But, what will most people do if they are canceled? I've heard that after commuter tickets were canceled in Shanghai, the city government offered low-income workers that used to use such



At this sales window, monthly tickets can only be purchased four days a month.

Photo by Zhuang Jian

tickets allowances for their transportation. That is one good way of dealing with the problem.

### Zhou Feng, employee in Guangdong Taiyangshen Group

In Guangzhou, most monthly ticket holders are students, low-income workers and retired people. Companies' losses are these people's gains, to some degree, since they save 10 to 20 yuan per month with the commuter tickets on average.

However, public transportation is a public service, and the monthly tickets are a form of welfare. Trying to get more money from low-income people is not the right way for transportation companies to try to be profitable.

The more developed a country is, the more money it should put towards subsidies and other forms of welfare to support and defend the rights of poorer people. Losses of money due to this are natural.

We should help people who are in trouble. In the case of monthly tickets, their use should be expanded, not cancelled, because they are very useful for the poor.

### Wu Feng, a conductor on the 331 bus line in Beijing

Our jobs would be much easier without commuter tickets. Some of my workmates have been criticized by passengers for not asking everyone if they have tickets. But, in practice, it's not that easy, since many

people have monthly tickets, so asking everybody is just a waste of time and energy.

At the same time, some people use fake or expired tickets, and it's hard to try to tell them from the real ones in the short time we have to check each individual ticket. Over time, that can lead to serious losses for the company.

The biggest problem caused by commuter tickets is they make passenger flow unbalanced. In Beijing, these tickets can only be used on buses that are 500-series or below. So, you can often see two buses on the same route, one filled completely, and the other almost empty. In other cases, people ride buses for short distances they could easily walk just to be sure they get the most out of their monthly tickets.

Routes and buses not open to monthly tickets are not used efficiently. Often, they aren't even half full. So, it would be better to cancel the monthly commuter tickets.

### Ma Longsheng, columnist for www.people.com.cn

The reason why commuter tickets appeared in the first place is that public transportation is a welfare-like service, in some respects. That explains why, in order to save money, some people are willing to cram into older buses on which they can use their monthly tickets in-

stead of taking more comfortable buses.

Meanwhile, the reason why city governments are moving to cancel these tickets is they want to get rid of this welfare "burden" in facing the contemporary market economy.

The best way for dealing with this is to find a balance between the interests of both sides. Of course, commuter tickets can help some people save badly needed money, but these tickets have also become "big rice bowls," because they can be bought and used by anybody who wants to spend less on transportation.

As the floating population grows, more people will want commuter tickets, which means the government will have to provide more subsidies. Naturally, the government can't shoulder the pressure of this bottomless money pit.

I see a clear solution to the problem. Install an IC card system. First, IC cards could be used to replace ticket sellers, cutting down on manpower, and therefore salary expenses, and making the transportation system more efficient. Second, intelligent cards would be able to show how often certain people take the bus. People who have relatively low incomes and clearly rely on buses could receive discounts. Using these cards would be a win-win situation for both sides.



# Not Enough Cadavers

## Beijingers remain reluctant to donate their bodies to science

By Su Wei

Half of the fewer than 6,000 Beijingers who have registered to donate their bodies since 1999 have had the registration notarized.

Staff at donation stations agree that the complicated and rigid notarization procedure is a key reason for this discrepancy. "Notarizing the registration is time and energy consuming," says Wang Wei, director of the Beijing Capital University of Medicine donation station.

There are three donation stations: at Peking Union University of Medicine, Beijing Capital University of Medicine and the Medical College of Beijing University.

Cao says that young people may not be prepared to take a day off work to collect the application form from the station, take it to the notarization office and then return with it. "Sometimes notarization can take one or two days," he adds.

Wang says for the elderly, while they may have the time, they are often not physically able. "Those who wish to donate their body to science must complete the notarization themselves. But what about the bedridden who want to become donors?"

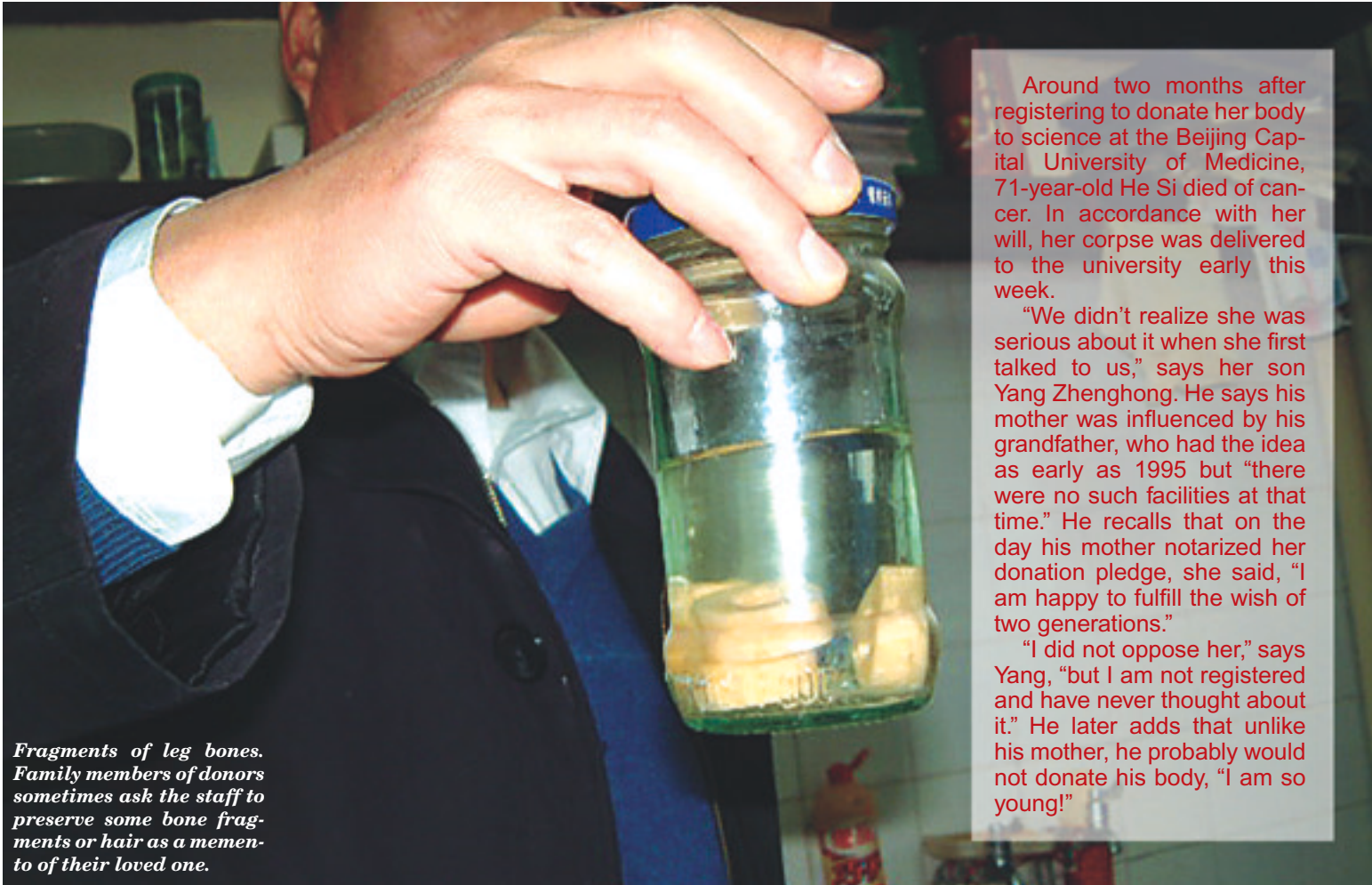
Cao Chenggang, director of the Peking Union University of Medicine donation station, says family interference is another reason that so few people have their pledges to donate notarized.

"We are frequently asked by elderly people who wish to donate their bodies to persuade their families to agree," he says. "But we cannot do so. All we can do is explain to their families the importance of such donations in furthering medical knowledge and training young doctors and surgeons."

### Fewer donated cadavers

Slightly more than 200 cadavers of notarized donors have been received by the three stations in total over the past three and a half years. This represents around seven percent of the total number of people who have notarized their pledges to donate their bodies.

Staff at the three stations all say it is often difficult to determine whether a pledged donor is still alive, and the whereabouts



Fragments of leg bones. Family members of donors sometimes ask the staff to preserve some bone fragments or hair as a memento of their loved one.

of the corpse if they are dead.

Cao says he knows of several people who were in their 80s and in weak physical condition when they made their notarization, "but we cannot call them and ask, 'Are you still alive?'"

Wang Wei says his station has the same problem. "Can we sue the family who does not obey the would-be donor's will and has the corpse cremated? Technically, we can, because the notarization is legally binding. But the corpse no longer exists." Legislation is needed to clarify the situation, he says.

According to Cao, such legislation was discussed in October 2000 at a meeting of the All China Anatomy Association.

"The draft was set out at that meeting, but there has been no further word on the issue," he says. "Passing the legislation should not be too difficult. It protects donor's rights, contains measures to prevent others interfering in the donation, and provides a legal basis for the stations."

Wang says would-be donors tend to consider that the way they choose to dispose of their own bodies is their own business. "But they may forget they cannot execute their own wills — the cadavers cannot come to the donation stations themselves. The responsibility of executing the will lies with the family."

The station at the Medical College of Beijing University receives the lowest number of donated cadavers of the three stations, only 42 in total.

Jin Zhuo, who is in charge of registration, says sometimes, bodies of people registered at their station are sent to one of the other two stations.

He says this is because their station is less well known and has "not so a high reputation" as the others. "However the science of medicine will benefit no matter where the cadaver is donated."

### Lack hampers study

It is hoped that the donation stations could provide more corpses for medical students' study, for at least eight medical

students use one corpse during anatomy classes.

For students in the Medical College of Beijing University and the Capital University of Medicine, the number rises to 10 and 12.

Wang and Jin agree that the number of cadavers received at their stations are far too few to meet the annual demands of the over 400 and 700 students per year respectively at their universities.

"Is there any possibility for a student to practice on a cadaver after nine others?" says Wang.

"Having no opportunity to practice, students may fail to master such basics as the order in which surgical instruments are used during an operation, or may not be able to find the precise location of the heart. But when people go to hospitals, they expect to be treated by good and experienced doctors! How does one become a good and experienced doctor? Through practice!"

He says if the bodies of just 1,000 of the roughly 70,000 Beijingers who die every year

Around two months after registering to donate her body to science at the Beijing Capital University of Medicine, 71-year-old He Si died of cancer. In accordance with her will, her corpse was delivered to the university early this week.

"We didn't realize she was serious about it when she first talked to us," says her son Yang Zhenghong. He says his mother was influenced by his grandfather, who had the idea as early as 1995 but "there were no such facilities at that time." He recalls that on the day his mother notarized her donation pledge, she said, "I am happy to fulfill the wish of two generations."

"I did not oppose her," says Yang, "but I am not registered and have never thought about it." He later adds that unlike his mother, he probably would not donate his body, "I am so young!"

were donated to science, the three stations would put up signs saying, "No more donations this year, thanks."

Cao says the figure of 119 corpses donated to their station may sound reasonable, but in fact, this number is only sufficient for teaching, not for research. Even experienced surgeons still need to practice before challenging operations, such as heart or liver transfers, he points out.

Li Lechun, 32, registered as a donor with his wife, Xing Shuhong, 33, a nurse, and his four-year-old son, Li Enliang. He says it was the experience of his son that led he and his wife to be donors. The son suffers from a rare metabolic disorder that was once wrongly diagnosed as epilepsy.

"There must be others who have similar experiences," says Li, "If the doctor had had some knowledge about the condition, my son would have had a better opportunity to be cured."

### Long term problems

Cao says that although they

appreciate young people voluntarily registering, "We really hope more old and physically weak people would do so. There is a Chinese saying — distant water cannot quench present thirst. But we cannot say we want to have more aged and say 'No' to the young. As long as someone registers we are happy."

Traditional ideas about death remain an influence. Among the over ten calls Wang receives per day, one or two are always about how much the station would pay for a donated cadaver. "People think there must be some kind of compensation for doing such a good deed."

Others who register often ask if there are any benefits, such as reduced medical fees. "It may sound reasonable, just like blood donation, but they forget that all the benefits received from donating blood come after the donation is made. But what can we do if their body is not delivered to the donation station?"

Operational expenses of the centers amount to tens of thousand of yuan per year, which is covered by the university. Cao recalls they once spent around 4,400 yuan to transport a corpse from Tianjin to Beijing. "The family requested us to use a hearse to fetch the body."

Another problem facing the three stations is that of promotion of what is widely regarded a sensitive issue. Zeng Li, 59, a middle school teacher says, "I feel uncomfortable when talking about it. Just imagine that a person is to be cut up! It used to be said that only bad people would have such a terrible ending."

### Still optimistic

Though staff at the three stations are not expecting a significant increase in notarized donations (only eight were registered at the Medical College of Beijing University in October), they are optimistic.

They agree that more people are likely to become donors through the efforts of other donors, such as 72-year-old Li Gangli, a peasant who has convinced some 100 villagers to register as donors, and the support of donors' families.

"It is just a matter of time," says Jin. Cao and Wang agree.

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# Married with AIDS



Xiao Ming takes medication for his fever at the community clinic in Guizhou Province. Photo by Liu Yu

By Zeng Pengyu / Ivy Zhang

**C**an a couple who are HIV-positive get married and have a child? This is the question facing a young couple from Guizhou province.

Xiao Qin, 28, tested HIV-positive four years ago. Her devoted boyfriend Xiao Ming, 23, has not yet tested positive, though doctors say he is at great risk, particularly if the couple go ahead with their wish to have a baby.

The couple decided to come to Beijing for their wedding day on December 1, which is also World's AIDS Day.

The theme for this year's AIDS Day is Live and Let Live, a sentiment of particular importance in China, which for so long has tried to keep AIDS under the carpet.

Xiao Qin and Xiao Ming have been together for five years. Now they want to get married and Xiao Qin is willing to have a baby, despite the risks.

Their story has aroused interest across the nation. Though Xiao Qin declares they are happy to the media, people might ask: is it true? Is the boy crazy?

Zeng Pengyu, a *Beijing Youth Daily* reporter, went to Guizhou Province last week to meet the couple at a community clinic providing services for people infected with HIV/AIDS as well as their relatives.

## Love story

Xiao Qin, a high-school graduate, is a drug-addict. In 1997 she lost her job and was in low spirits.

"One of my friends who was a drug user advised me to 'smoke', saying I would forget my troubles," Xiao Qin said. "I can't believe how stupid I was. I started to take drugs." She soon developed a full-on heroin habit.

Xiao Qin said by then she already knew Xiao Ming. They first met on a night in 1997. Xiao Qin was walking back home through a dark alley when Xiao Ming, a taxi driver, passed.

"He asked me if I needed a cab. I said no as I was close to home. However, he offered to give me a free lift as the car was empty and it was dark out there," Xiao Qin said. "At that time, I felt he was a nice guy. I stepped into the car. We soon fell in love. Half a year later, we began to live together."

When Xiao Ming found out Xiao Qin was taking drugs, he asked her to try and quit.

In 1998, Xiao Qin went to a drug clinic. A routine blood test was done and two months later, she was told she had been infected with HIV.

Xiao Qin said good-bye to

Xiao Ming and left town without telling anybody where she was going. But two months later, Xiao Ming found her.

"One day he suddenly showed up in front of me and shouted my name. I was dumbfounded for a few seconds and I said nothing but then I held him, crying."

Despite Xiao Ming's help, Xiao Qin's life is difficult.

Xiao Qin used to run a laundry shop next to Xiao Ming's home. The business went well but other people from the drug clinic spread the news that "Xiao Qin has disease" and customers began to withdraw. Since then, the gossip about her has never ceased.

"I wanted to die. One time, I took an overdose of Heroin. I collapsed over a coal burning stove and burned my arm," Xiao Qin said pointing at a scar left on her arm. "Xiao Ming felt something was wrong and broke into the room. He saved me. A similar case happened another time."

Xiao Qin said it is hard to describe how good Xiao Ming is to her.

As Xiao Qin has been jobless for a long time, Xiao Ming works overtime and saves his lunch money to buy food for them both. Sometimes, if he's worried about her, he takes Xiao Qin along while he drives the cab to keep her from trying to commit suicide again.

It's been a struggle, but now they are happy together and want to get married. "We want to have a home and live a quiet and steady life," said Xiao Qin.

## Face the odds together

Xiao Ming was well aware of what it would mean to spend his life with Xiao Qin.

"He knows everything. This community clinic is also a hospital for HIV/AIDS patients. We come over here every month to learn about how HIV spreads and its symptoms. We both read the books and materials on HIV/AIDS. But he is not well educated and fails to understand many words. So I often read out to him," Xiao Qin said.

When the couple were interviewed, Xiao Ming was lying in bed, getting an infusion and looking pale and thin. Xiao Qin said he had a high fever and the doctor said his lung was infected.

The last time Xiao Ming took the HIV test was in March. Doctor Hu Shaoyuan from Guiyang City's Disease Prevention and Control Center has been treating the couple. He admits he can't be sure whether Xiao Ming is infected with HIV or not.

"Although he was not infected

in the past few years, he is undoubtedly in great danger of becoming infected," Dr. Hu said.

To make things worse, Xiao Ming has also picked up a drug habit during the past eight months. His purpose was to convince Xiao Qin to quit drugs because he "did not believe it would be that difficult to quit." Instead, he became addicted too.

Asked if he is worried about getting infected with HIV, Xiao Ming says, "I am not afraid at all. If I am infected, we can both face the odds and fight against the virus."

## Can she have a healthy baby?

Xiao Qin, along with five other HIV-infected people came to the Guiyang Women and Children's Health Care Hospital last Saturday to meet with dozens of local volunteers.

At the meeting, Dr. Hu announced that Xiao Qin and Xiao Ming are going to Beijing at the end of this month to participate in the annual HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Meeting on December 1 and have their wedding on the same day.

Xiao Qin has said how she loves children and hopes to have a healthy baby. Dr. Hu said he would discuss the issue with medical experts during his trip to Beijing with Xiao Qin.

They could, in theory, help Xiao Qin have a healthy baby by minimizing the amount of virus in Xiao Qin's body through medication.

"If this problem can be solved, it would surely be a good thing for HIV infected people," said Dr. Hu.

But the questions are: Are HIV/AIDS infected people eligible to get married in China? What are the risks the baby will be infected? And what if its parents die?

In China's Marriage Law, there is one article indicating scenarios under which marriage is forbidden, one of which is for "people who have serious diseases".

However, which kinds of disease fall into this bracket are not defined by the law. But this is where it's important to recognize the difference between people who are HIV-positive and those who have AIDS.

For the HIV infected, "on average, the virus incubation period lasts six to ten years in China. During this period, the sufferer is no different to anyone else, except that the virus is in them and likely to spread," said Dr. Yu Dongbao, deputy chief of the Health Education and Intervention Division, National Center for AIDS/STD

Control and Prevention.

"When the immune system is totally broken down and symptoms like high fever and pneumonia appear, then the person is an AIDS patient," Dr. Yu said.

In China, Dr. Yu said, HIV infected people are not prohibited from getting married but both parties need to know the situation they are in and consult with medical professionals prior to their marriage on how to prevent and cope with HIV/AIDS infection.

According to Red Ribbon Home of Ditan Hospital, two young couples, one from Beijing and the other from Henan Province, got married this year. In both cases, the men were HIV-positive.

As for AIDS patients, the Ministry of Health regulates that a "delayed marriage" shall be imposed.

"As for medical professionals, we do not encourage AIDS patients to get married because they are likely to die within six months to two years after the symptoms are recognized," said Dr. Yu.

"AIDS patients are vulnerable and unable to fulfill their responsibility in a family. From the medical perspective, we do not advocate marriage. From the legal perspective, they need to delay their marriage."

But what about giving birth?

The baby is at risk of infection in three ways: in the womb; during labor or through breast feeding.

The infection rate in underdeveloped countries is high. In African countries, the rate is from 15% to 45%, without any medical intervention. Even with medical intervention, the rate is still 10%.

What the figure would be in China, nobody knows, according to Dr. Yu.

But Dr. Yu said HIV/AIDS mothers are not encouraged to give birth to a baby in China due to the following risks:

○ Even with effective intervention, about 10% of babies are likely to be HIV infected at birth. Compared with adults, they are in a much more serious situation and could die at the age of two or three.

○ Even if the baby is HIV free, its parents, if both infected with HIV, could die a few years later as there is still no cure for the disease. Thus the baby would become an orphan.

"We usually tell the patients about the risks they face if they want to have a baby. But if they insist on having a baby and are willing to take the responsibilities, they can go ahead with it," said Dr. Yu.

# China Seeks Top Soccer Boss

By Hou Mingxin

A team from the Chinese Football Association (CFA) has just returned to Beijing, following a 12-day trip in Europe intended to find a new coach for the national soccer team.

"It was a fruitful trip, we met several top coaches, and we will make our decision soon," said Nan Yong, vice chairman of the CFA and head of the coach-selecting group.

## CFA to go Dutch, or French

Coach Bora Milutinovic, who led China to its first-ever World Cup finals, has stepped down and the CFA wants a top foreign coach to continue the progress.

Impressed by the success of China's two neighbors, South Korea and Japan, in the 2002 World Cup, the CFA has decided a Dutch or French coach is the obvious choice.

South Korea achieved the seemingly impossible, making it to the semifinals. A decade ago, Japan were still a struggling team but they made it to the last 16 of the World Cup, while China lost all three of its group games and failed to score a single goal. Guus Hiddink, the Dutch coach of the South Korean team, and Philippe Troussier, the French coach of Japan, were widely applauded for the results

achieved by their strict regimes, even though many in Japan blamed Troussier's tactics for Japan's exit from the World Cup.

## Requirements for new coach

According to a report published in Guangzhou-based Soccer News, the new coach must be influential in the football world, have some knowledge of the current situation of Asian football, and have experience of coaching a national side. Preferably, he would be under the age of 55.

Shortly after the World Cup, the CFA invited Hiddink to take over the Chinese team. Unfortunately, the Dutchman refused the offer, preferring to coach a club in Holland.

## List of Candidates

Arie Haan, born in 1948 in Holland is a former star of Ajax, Holland's leading club and one of the most famous in the world. He was part of the famous generation of Dutch players that reached the World Cup finals in 1974 and 1978. He started his coaching career in Stuttgart in 1987 and is now the sports manager of SV Stuttgart Kickers club.

Co Adriaanse, born in 1947 in Amsterdam, coached Ajax from 1992 to 1998. Now, he is the coach of AZ Alkmaar club. He has much experience in training young players.

Philippe Troussier, former coach of Japan (1998-2002), led Japan to become the No.1 team in Asia. Such was his success that for Japan to go out in the second round of the World Cup came as something of a shock. Before coming to Asia, the Frenchman coached Tunisia's national team, and enjoyed

similarly rapid progress.

Humberto Coelho is the former coach of Portugal. In Euro 2000, he took his team to the semifinals.

Willem Van Hanegem, another Dutch soccer hero of the 1970s, is currently the assistant coach of Holland.

Henri Michel, the former French national coach and Frank Rijksd, the former coach of Holland, are also on the list.

## Who's the most likely man?

On November 20th, the Chinese media reported that Dutchman Arie Haan is seen as the top candidate. "Arie Haan has quit his job in Germany, apparently because of a big job offer," said Soccer News.

As a player, Haan played at the top level in two World Cup finals. He has much coaching experience at top European clubs including PSV Eindhoven and Stuttgart. But he has no experience of coaching a national team. That is his one shortcoming.

There is strong interest in Troussier, but a month ago he turned down an offer from the CFA, saying he needed a long vacation and he wanted a job in Europe. But, recently his attitude seems to have changed and he has expressed an in-

terest in coaching the Chinese team. Last week, he met the CFA group in a hospital in Europe where he was having an operation on his knee.

However, Troussier's salary requirements could prove a stumbling block, as he is rumored to be asking for at least US\$1 million a year. That's less than half of what England are paying Sven Goran Eriksson but it could still be too high.

Co Adriaanse is also seen as one of the frontrunners. Rich experience in training young players is the Dutchman's strong-point. From 1992 to 1998, Adriaanse was the coach of the youth team of Ajax, a team which has a history of producing outstanding young players.

"Compared with Troussier, Adriaanse has asked for a more modest salary, somewhere in the region of half a million US dollars per year," said Titan Sports.

## New coach faces pressure

Milutinovic always said he wanted his players to enjoy their football, since he took over the Chinese team in January, 2000. But his loose training approach was always somewhat controversial in the

nation's soccer circles and drew heavy criticism following China's limp World Cup debut.

The poor results sounded an alarm for Chinese soccer officials, who know that it will be much harder for China to qualify for the next World Cup.

But millions of fanatical soccer fans in China are impatient for success. Also, China will host the Asian Cup in 2004 and the Olympic Games in 2008. China needs a stronger national soccer team in time for those events.



Arie Haan



Philippe Troussier



Co Adriaanse

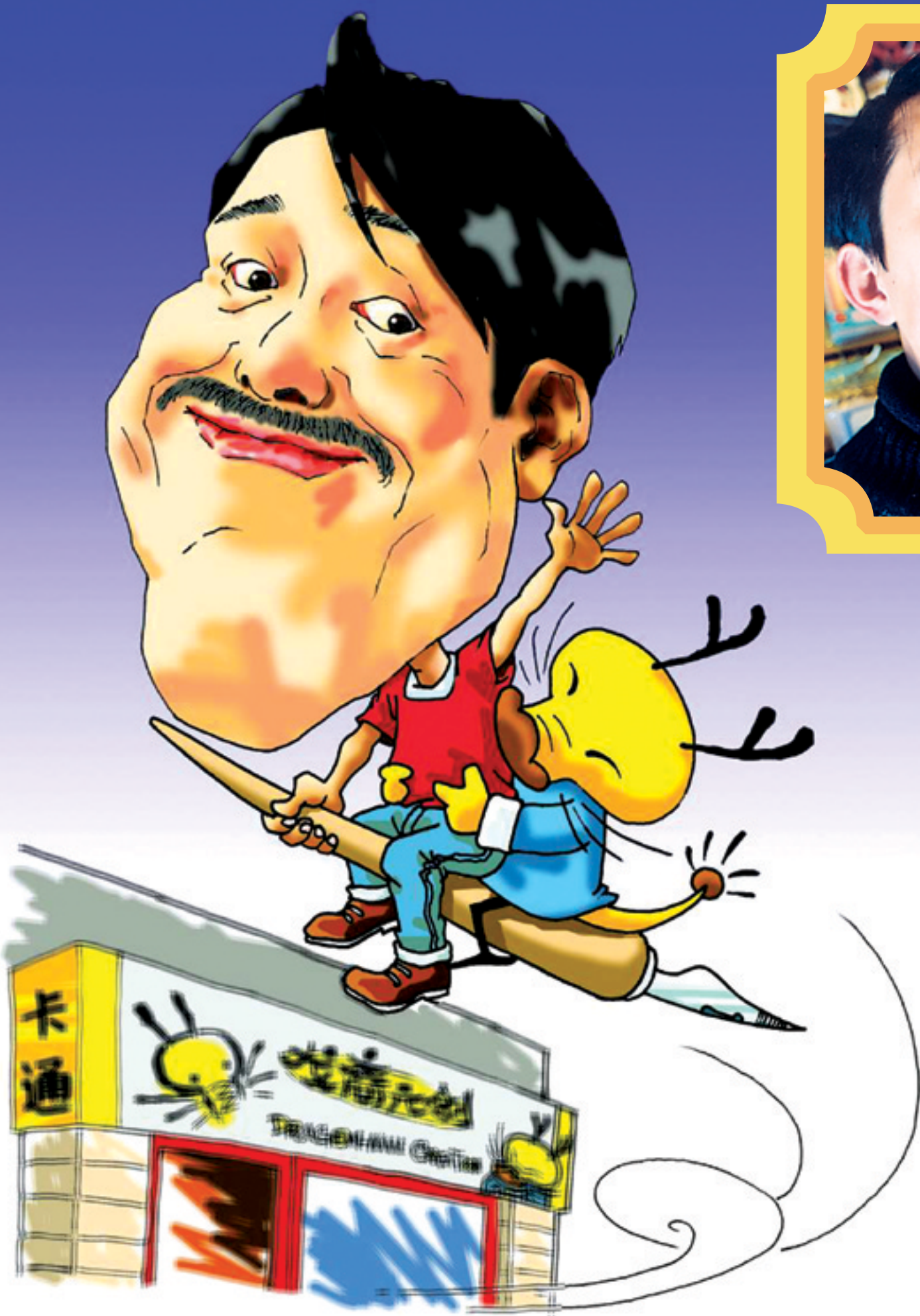


Humberto Coelho



Willem Van Hanegem





By Zhao Pu

It's just a simple shop on Guozijian street. Last month, Rong Fei closed his shop for 20 days for re-decoration. He hung a note outside telling his patrons when he was going to re-open, but it was taken down by the local administrative office. When he came back to his shop several days later, he found dozens of messages left on the big glass window at the security exchange market next door — "What's wrong with the shop?" "When will it open?" "Where is Rong Fei?"

One impressive message read: "I've been waiting for three hours!" and beside it the author had drawn a pile of shit to express his disappointment and anger. Another visitor left his mobile phone number and asked Rong to call him when the shop was open. His neighbor's food shop also complained to him, "When will you re-open your shop? Those young people come and ask everyday."

What could inspire such devotion? Dragon-man Creation is the first comic shop in China and its founder, 31-year-old Rong Fei, aims to tap into this small but fanatical market.

When he set up the shop three years ago, the comic market didn't look that promising. "It's not about making a profit. The shop is a place to entertain and satisfy my fellow comics fans," says Rong. But now there are three other comic shops in Beijing, and Rong is seen as a pioneer.

#### Drawn on a path

Rong entered the world of comics in 1988 when he enrolled in Beijing Industrial Arts School and began his major in advertising design. After class, he liked to read various magazines in the school's library. There were some comic magazines from Japan and Germany which ignited Rong's interest in comics and cartoons, which were still uncommon in China.

One magazine impressed him most. "It was a Japanese magazine with cartoons about commercial areas and social life," says Rong. "I never imagined that comics and cartoons could be used in such a wide range, from ads to government programs." The use and popularity

of comics in Japan fascinated Rong. He began to shift his design style to comics and cartoons.

After graduating, Rong was employed by a lacquer-ware manufacturer. His main job was designing flowery pat-



From 1996 to 1999, Rong stayed at home, working as a freelance comics author.

terns on lacquer-ware. In 1991, Rong took part in a caricature contest organized by *Worker's Daily*. He sent three pieces, two of which won awards. When he went to the daily, a designer asked him, "Are these really yours?" It seems his style was so unlike the standard caricatures in China at that time as to be unrecognizable. He has been a freelance illustrator for the daily ever since, drawing for news illustrations.

In the same year he quit his job at the lacquer-ware manufacturer and joined an advertising company as a designer. In the first few years after graduation, Rong had been changing jobs frequently, but hadn't found anything satisfying. "I kept on looking for a job closer to my real interest," says Rong.

In 1994, he thought he'd finally got what he really wanted: a job in a cartoon studio. But soon he found the atmosphere in the studio was stiflingly commercial. "In order to cut costs, the boss required only speed and ignored quality," says Rong. Sometimes he wanted to make the cartoons more interesting and complex, but his boss would tell him to forget anything "unnecessary". "How can cartoons that are so simple be entertaining and impressive?" This production line was not what Rong had in mind and he quit a year later.

#### Leading edge

In 1995, Chen Xilin, a friend of Rong's, established a comics studio and invited Rong to work with him. Chen and his friend, famous novelist Wang Shuo, jointly published a comic series, *See the World through Two Puppets' Eyes*. They expressed their views on cultural and social events in this series and Rong designed it.

The time in his friend's studio was happy, but not structured enough for Rong. "I finished a whole week's work in just two days. And during the other three days I could only sit in the office reading newspapers and magazines. I felt I was wasting too much time," says Rong. "I would rather stay at home and create my own works." He revealed his frustration to his friend and resigned.

Rong spent his time at home, working as a freelance comics author for magazines and newspapers. During this period, he published many comic strips in *Beijing Cartoon* magazine, the only cartoon magazine in Beijing. With his name more and more recognized by comic fans in Beijing and around the country, Rong was one the first domestic authors to become well known.

He still had a problem, though. Rong found buying materials and references about comics very inconvenient in Beijing, as there was not a single comics shop in the city. He asked his mother who worked at the Chinese embassy in



In March 1999, Rong opened the first comics shop in China and began to "rob" domestic comics fans.

Canada to send comic books and materials to him from Canada and America. "My mother sent everything she could back to me, including cartoon books,

A perfect business partnership — the husband is the art director, and the wife runs the business side.

Photo by Wang Wei



# Comic Book Hero



comic magazines and photos of comic shops," says Rong.

From the materials his mother gathered for him, he found that the comic shops in some foreign countries sold not only comic books but also provided special tools for creating comics, as well as T-shirts, cups and original works. "You can find everything about comics and cartoons in those shops," says Rong. The shops are also places for comic authors and their fans to meet and exchange comics.

"It would be cool if there was such a shop in China!" Rong thought to himself. He told his idea to his mother and his friends. Some of his friends were very excited and his mother also encouraged him to set up a comics shop.

In March 1999, Rong opened his shop, the first one of its kind in China, at Guozijian Street, Dongcheng district. "Foreign countries have markets that

the shop first opened, they ran it by themselves. Rong was the art director, and Gu Hua ran the business side. "She has better business nerves than I do," says Rong. In April last year they went



The diligent couple takes care of their "comics farm".

Cartoons by Rong Fei

to Hong Kong for their honeymoon. "We spent most of our time in comic shops in Hong Kong," says Rong. "We were happy to discover that we have all the things they do and our shop is bigger."

Rong sells mainly cartoon series from Japan and Hong Kong, in addition to various comic tools, T-shirts, cups and toys. A wall in his shop is devoted to domestic comic author's works. "I introduce a domestic author every month in my shop, most of them are my friends," says Rong.

What makes him feel proud is that not only Beijing natives visit his pioneer shop, a number of his patrons come from all over the country. During weekends, there are always some people coming from nearby cities like Tianjin or Tangshan. And in summer and winter holidays, students travel from some faraway provinces like Yunnan or Heilongjiang to visit his shop. There are also some parents coming with a shopping list made by their children in other cities.

Rong says he expects to establish a comics studio next year. And the studio will function as a support to his shop. And after that, he plans to build a 24-hour comics bar. "It will provide comics fans with a place for communication and activities," says Rong.



The two comic creators married each other last year.

are crying out for comic shops but mine appeared when few people in China knew about them," Rong smiles.

"In Japan, there are over 2,000 comics and cartoon magazines with circulation as high as 6 million; while in China, there are only five comic magazines, circulating 30 to 50 thousand at most," says Rong. The domestic market is still small. But Rong believes it's going to grow fast. "See those teenage comic fans? They will make a strong consumer group in ten years when they are financially independent," he says confidently.

#### Forward advance

Rong got married last year to Gu Hua who is a cartoon designer. When





Master Benxing

# The Master's Apprentices

## The elegant strains of Zhihua Temple Music

By Iris Miao

Zhihua Temple is at the center of all the noises of the city. To the north is a vast swathe of ruins of demolished and semi-demolished dwellings; to the east, the Second Ring Road is just two minutes walk away. But despite the surrounding hubbub, the temple is a miracle of quietude. It is so silent that you can hear the soft thud of the occasional pear falling to the ground when standing alone in the courtyard outside the Shrine of Greatness and Magnificence. Given that the temple sees only twenty or thirty visitors a day, there is plenty of opportunity to stand alone there.

"It was so deserted, not like a place of our time at all when I took office last December," says Wang Dan, the young and energetic curator. "Now with the arrival of three apprentices, the sound of them practicing their music has given new life to the temple."

### The music

Zhihua Temple music has its origins in the imperial court music of the Tang and Song dynasties. It was introduced to the temple by Wang Zhen, a eunuch favored by Emperor Yingzong of the Ming Dynasty. In 1446, claiming that he was constructing a private temple, Wang built a "small court" outside the Forbidden City. Zhihua Temple, with its black glazed roof tiles, elaborate caisson ceilings, gorgeous frescoes and huge Dharma Wheel, rivaled the splendor of the imperial city. Wang then introduced the court music, a privilege of the throne, to the temple, where it was adopted by Buddhist monks and became part of their ritual.

The monks had begun performing for money outside the temple at funerals and various ceremonies, when in 1449 Wang Zhen was killed during a battle with Mongolian troops. The master and apprentice system was then established at the temple, and the music has been passed down from generation to generation since then in an unbroken line. As the music is originally from the palace and was popular in the Beijing area, it also came to be known as Jing (Capital) Music. Gradually a Jing Music School, headed by Zhihua



Afternoon lesson in the courtyard. Master Benxing oversees his three students, Lü Zhanpeng, Liu Yonghua, Ren Diangang.

Photos by Michael Reynolds

Temple was established, and followed by some ten temples in the capital.

### Preservation

When the imperial music was incorporated into Buddhist activities, it became embodied with a kind of religious mystery and divinity, which prevented it from developing while preserving many of the original ancient musical elements.

Guan (管), for example, a type of wind instrument, are exactly the same today as those used in the Northern Song Dynasty court (960-1127), as can be seen from the *Music Book*, written by Chen Yang of Song Dynasty.

The format of the music scores used in Jing Music is that of folk scores of the Song Dynasty. Also the melody, names of tunes, and performing methods are all inherited from the Tang and Song dynasties (618-1279).

### Ups and downs

In 1743, the Qing court ordered

that the memorial hall and statue of Wang Zhen in the temple be destroyed. The music itself suffered a narrow escape. During the 1910s and 20s, with the country in a state of constant turmoil, the number of worshippers at the temple decreased drastically, and the music again almost disappeared.

In 1953, a score hand-copied by Yongqian, the 15th abbot, was uncovered. The resulting music played by the 19 monks of the temple created a stir in the capital. Jing Music was then officially separated from Buddhist ritual and elevated to an art form in its own right.

In 1984, monks were recalled to Guanghua Temple, performing for the first time in 30 years.

Two years later, the Beijing Buddhist Philharmonic was established, with Zhihua Temple Music as a central musical style. In 1990, monks returned to Zhihua Temple and in 1993, six apprentices from Qujiaying, Hebei

Province came to study under the guidance of the 26th generation Master Zhang Benxing. Three years later, after mastering all the existing scores, five of the apprentices left the temple, because "they were too poorly paid," says Benxing. The sixth one left last year.

### The three students

The three new students, Lü Zhanpeng, Ren Diangang, Liu Yonghua, all 23, are also from Qujiaying. Before they came to the temple in August, they had all been studying at home for around five years.

Every morning they rise at six and begin lessons at 6:30 for one hour. They look after the halls during the day, spending most of the time practicing. After the temple closes at 4:30 pm, they spend another half hour reading and reciting the scores after their master Benxing.

"They have learnt fast," Benxing says loudly, "they are young."

ly ticket and bicycle. Recalling the world tours he made with his fellow master musicians in 1987, and to Manila in 2000, he says, "Munich and Berlin to Paris, then Switzerland, then back to Frankfurt, all the seats were sold out, and chairs were added along the aisles," he says, "Yes, I love the applause."

Of the one to two hundreds of scores the music used to have, Benxing knows 34 pieces, more than anyone else.

Wang Dan says the last time she saw Benxing on stage was in August. As she watched him sitting there playing the Chinese gong chimes, she felt deeply concerned about him. "The old are like a candle light, you never know when they will go out," says Wang, "The passing away of an old artist is like losing a library. He will take everything away with him."

### A half-million preservation proposal

Wang Dan made a proposal in August to the State Cultural Relics Bureau on passing on and preserving the intangible heritage. The proposal will cost 570,000 yuan to implement. Wang says she was quite "honest" about the figure. "If we were granted the money, we can accomplish something," she says. This "something" includes holding national and international seminars, special exhibitions, establishing an orchestra, training and rehearsing regularly, producing CDs, and reproducing the ancient music instruments. Apart from the instrumental music, Zhihua Temple music also includes singing and chanting, however only a few old men are familiar with it, and there are no apprentices so far. Wang says this part is most likely to be recorded for later use as a training material.

The Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau has given much support to the temple, however most of this has gone to restoring the actual buildings. Wang submitted her 570,000 proposal directly to the state, rather than the municipal bureau, when the pear trees blossomed. Now the fruit has begun to fall, but she has not yet received an answer.

"If it is rejected by the state bureau, I'll submit it to the municipal bureau next year," says Wang.

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# Computer Graphics — Creative Potential

By Yan Xiaosong

**T**he most important is not technology itself, but the creative idea or story," says Andrew Witkin, of Carnegie Mellon

University Robotics Institute. While most people in the industry would no doubt agree with this sentiment, few would disagree that it is the technology itself that allows these creative ideas to be realized. Witkin was winner of the computer graphics achievement award at Siggraph 2001 for work he did with Pixar Animation, the studio behind the *Toy Story* movies and *Monsters Inc.*

According to Sheng Xiangyang, chief scientist of Microsoft Research Asia (MRA), China is a key player in the computer graphics boom. "In computer graphic science, Chinese are more creative if their research environment is suitable," says Sheng. Sheng is now leading a research group on visual computing in MRA.

"Our fruit will turn into a part of the product of Microsoft in five years," says Sheng, "At the Computer Graphic 2002 China Festival, I have seen many CG fans and their works. It is really wonderful. Although I am only a researcher, I believe there is a computer graphic product market coming to emergence in China."

Liu Tianrong, Executive Chief Editor of CG Magazine believes three powers



Animusic-A Perfect Combination of MIDI Music and Computer Graphic Animation.

are driving the computer graphic market forward; technological progress, demand for products, and the imagination of some talented users, both domestic and international. "In China, the computer graphic market is still in its infancy. As a concept of industry, it only really appeared in the last couple of years. CG is a fashion all of a sudden. Thus, CG Magazine was born," he says.

In 1993, computer graphics were first used in China for some animation special effects on a CCTV program. At that time, only a handful of college professors had experience in the field. With technology simplifying and improving, the first generation of computer graphic companies in China quickly emerged. Within a few years, a Pentium 4 PC was all one needed to show their talent in computer graphics.

"Technology is one side of the coin, the other is the market," says Xiao Yongliang, a technical supervisor at Bluesky Studio. Unlike in the US market, many small local studios compete fiercely for low profits; less than 500 yuan per second of three-dimensional animation. Such low prices mean it is difficult for studios to grow and develop, according to Xiao Yongliang.

"Compared with others, our success is attributed to our lucky selection at the beginning of the company," says Lu Zhenggang, general manager of Crystal Imaging, a large computer graphic company with 300 employees. "The CG market is not independent. It mainly depends on need of other markets, film and television, or simulation, architecture, etc. Every branch market has its own profit rate. The higher the profit rate of the branch market, the more comfortable the CG company life in it. We are the first CG company to make three dimension wandering animation in China."

Liu Tianrong says, "As a new market, CG would be at a lower level as a whole, in the long term. The core technology and patents are owned by the foreign company. So the greatest benefit is theirs. In the CG application market, most local companies are too small to enter the international competition. Chinese are not stupid, give them a chance, they will learn to do it better. But it will take at least ten years."

## Winter Exhibition Highlights Diversity

By Qiao Luqiang

**W**inter Collection Exhibition at Qing Gallery features over 80 new works by more than 20 young artists.

Using oil, ink and wash, and wood-block printing, the artists tackle diverse themes, and social issues, ranging from life in Tibet, to reflections on traditional culture, to comments on current social trends by Chinese artists who have returned from abroad.

At first glance, the wood-block print *The Bell Tower*, by Beijing artist Gao Rongsheng, is the image that best fits with the title of this exhibition. An ancient bell tower of typical Chinese architectural style stands among old Beijing courtyards. Contrasted by the dark, withered, leafless trees, the roofs are covered in heavy, white snow. Like many others born in the fifties, Gao Rongsheng expresses strong and complex feelings using a direct, simple technique and solid color.

In contrast, there is no sense

of nostalgia the painting *I Don't Care To Have It Or Not!* by Xiao Se. Born in the 70s, Xiao Se confronts the audience with stark, uncompromising questions. A happy looking couple stand, each cradling a violin, among lotus leaves and flowers. A poor man with an empty bowl stands beside them, looking puzzled. In this arguably overstated counterpoint, Xiao Se seems to be suggesting that the adoption of western cultural values is directly related to the plight of the economically underprivileged.

**Where:** Qing Gallery, Huawei Paradise 1-1E (North of Beijing Curio City) Chaoyang

**When:** November 15-30  
**Tel:** 8779 0461, 8779 0458



Photo by Zhuang Jian

## China — No Threat, No Collapse

By Sun Yan

**C**laims that China, by virtue of its rapidly growing economy, represents a threat to other countries in the region, or that the bubble is about to burst with devastating effects, are the subjects of a new book by journalist Liu Xiaobiao.

In *What Motivated China Threat and China Collapse*, Liu argues that both these theories are without foundation.

According to Liu, the "China threat" theory, which started gaining prominence in the early 1990s, is intended to damage China's international status and restrain its development. This argument not only affects the formulation of policies toward China by the United States and other western countries, but has also influenced some neighbors of China.

However, after the entry of China to the World Trade Organization in 2001, the "threat" theory appears to have receded, to be replaced by the "China Collapse" theory, the main manifes-

tation of which is "to query the truthfulness of China's economic growth," writes Liu.

In June this year, Liu wrote an editorial in the *China Daily* titled from a *Theory of Threat* to a *Theory of Collapse*, which triggered heated discussion on the Internet. Realizing the importance of the topic, he immediately started working on the book.

According to executive editor Cao Hongju, the book aims to introduce the origin and development of the two theories. "People seldom knew the existence of the theories before, and after reading it, the theories might be taken seriously."

"Actually, the theories of 'China threat' and 'China collapse' were fabricated out of the same motive: to damage China and contain its development and growth," Liu Xiaobiao writes in the conclusion, "We want readers to form basic ideas about them, though to some extent, the book is not so satisfying that it needs further promotion."

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# Call “Brother”, Viewers’ Tearful

By Yu Shanshan  
With a title like *Call Me Brother, I Will Be Tearful*, audiences probably know what to expect. This is the sentimental tale of friends sent to the countryside as kids during the Cultural Revolution and the changes they go through in the following decades, reflecting the changes in China. Written by Li Longyun, this is the fifth production by the National Theater since it started last December. The play opened last Friday at Capital Theater.

Lasting more than two and a half hours, it’s uncomfortable viewing at times, especially close to the end. But the excellent



Photo by Wei Tong

performers here make it most watchable.

Poverty in childhood turns Xiao Luo (Liu Wei) into a man who believes money is the only thing that matters, and for it he even sacrifices the friendship of Er Xiang (Zhao Liang), his oldest friend, his “brother”.

The story follows these two friends, from their return to Beijing in 1978 and through the economic reforms that followed. Its themes are the growing obsession with business as well as the struggle of the characters to preserve their humanity through many trials.

This play follows on in a similar vein to *Wildland and Man*, also by Li Longyun. “The hardest struggle in life is the struggle with oneself,” he says.

Directed by Cao Qijing, the play features music by Dong Weijie, and stage design by Liu Kedong.



Arlecchino

## Arlecchino Comes to Beijing

By Wang Chunzhu  
Piccolo Teatro’s *Arlecchino*, came to Beijing this week.

*Arlecchino* is one of the most famous plays in the Italian Commedia dell’Arte tradition, which is based on improvisation and expressive use of gesture and words. Arlecchino has a cat-like mask and a costume of multicolored patches. He is always hungry and playing jokes, and is considered witty and impudent.

The original play was written in 1745 by Carlo Goldoni

(1707-1793), the renowned Italian playwright. *Arlecchino* was developed for Piccolo Teatro by Giorgio Strehler (1921-1997), a great Italian director.

Strehler, founder of the Piccolo Teatro and of the Union of European Theatres, injected vitality into Arlecchino’s character and gave the play a clear, deeply human message. The play has traveled all over the world for more than 50 years with its message of peace and friendship among different countries and more than 1000 Italian actors have played in its 10 different editions.

Ferruccio Soleri, the well-known Italian actor and director, started playing the role of Arlecchino 39 years ago. Now, at 72 years old, he remains an extraordinarily acrobatic Arlecchino.

## Leon Lai’s Acting Skills Recognized At Last

By Wang Chunzhu  
Leon Lai’s in danger of becoming credible. The purveyor of cheesy pop songs has also long been known for his fairly wooden movie performances, but things seem to be improving, at least on the acting front. Lai got the Best Leading Actor award at the 39th Golden Horse Awards held last Saturday in Chinese Taipei. “It means I’ve been recognized for my acting skills,” he said.

In the movie *Three-Going Home*, Lai leaves behind his slick Canto-hearth throb image for that



A Scene from Three-Going Home

of a depressed middle-age man. He plays a herbalist doctor who firmly believes that he can bring his dead wife back to life with his traditional therapy.

The Golden Horse Awards are held annually in Chinese Taipei. Other major winners this year include: Best Feature Film: *The Best of Times* / Best Director: Fruit Chan (*Hollywood Hong Kong*) / Best Leading Actress: Lee Sin-Je (*The Eye*) / Best Supporting Actor: Anthony Hong (*Princess D*) / Best Supporting Actress: Karena Lam (*July Rhapsody*) / Best New Performer: Karena Lam (*July Rhapsody*)

## Another Step for Zhang Ziyi

By Wang Chunzhu  
Following up on her role in Zhang Yimou’s all-star feature, *Hero*, Zhang Ziyi will be appearing alongside Maggie Cheung (Zhang Manyu) and Tony Leung (Liang Chaowei) in director Wong Kar-wai’s *2046*.

There was no screenplay for

*2046* when she took the part, so Miss Zhang had little idea what kind of role she was going to perform. Indeed little is known about the film except that it’s a follow up to *In the Mood for Love*, the film which brought Wong international repute.

“I’m very excited!” Zhang Ziyi says. She’s putting together a pretty impressive filmography, having already worked with several of the leading lights of Chinese cinema.

### WORLDWIDE



Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II meets Halle Berry and Pierce Brosnan.

**James Bond Back on Her Majesty’s Secret Service**  
Queen Elizabeth went to the movies on Monday to see her most famous secret agent James Bond celebrate 40 years as the silver screen’s top spy.

For Brosnan, playing one of the great movie icons is “like slipping on a comfy pair of old slippers.”

“I am very proud of Bond and very proud to have completed four films,” said the suave Irishman, greeted by a barrage of adoring fans outside London’s Royal Albert Hall. “This was the best one,” he boasted. (Reuters)

compositions and a cover of *Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea*. (Reuters)

**Caroline Kennedy Honors Mom in Paris**  
Caroline Kennedy, speaking flawless French, paid tribute to her mother and the city of Paris on Monday, saying Jacqueline Kennedy’s elan and trendsetting flair were born of the French capital.



Caroline Kennedy speaks next to the poster promoting the exhibition.

Accompanied by her uncle, Massachusetts Democrat Sen. Edward Kennedy, Caroline Kennedy traveled to Paris to celebrate the opening of *Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years — Selections From the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum*.

The exhibition opens Tuesday in Paris, the only overseas stop after its U.S. tour.

In a rare public appearance, Caroline Kennedy said Paris was “the city that my mother loved, and that inspired her throughout her life.” (AP)



Kevin Spacey

**Spacey Takes Quest for New Talent to the Web**  
In *Pay it Forward*, Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey played a teacher who challenged his students to act on simple ideas to change the world.

Now Spacey himself is trying to do just that, using the Internet to open Hollywood to new talent.

The sponsored site aims to let screenwriters and filmmakers share and critique each other’s short films, giving them a wider audience than they could reach otherwise.

“If you just look at the technology 20 years ago and you were a young filmmaker, you just didn’t have the tools (to make a movie),” Spacey told Reuters. (Reuters)

**Posthumous George Harrison Album Released**  
The album ex-Beatle George Harrison recorded in the last months of his life as he fought a losing battle with cancer was released on Monday his recording company said.

*Brainwashed*, the first release of new solo material from the Beatles’s former lead guitarist since his 1987 album *Cloud Nine*, features 11 new Harrison

**Denzel on Ticket for Candidate Redo**  
Denzel Washington will reprise Frank Sinatra’s role in an update of the 1962 political thriller *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Based on the 1959 novel by Richard Condon, *Candidate* combined a political thriller with black-hearted satire. Sinatra starred opposite Angela Lansbury and Laurence Harvey.

Washington, who will make his directorial bow with Fox Searchlight’s *Antwone Fisher* December 19, recently wrapped *Out of Time* for MGM. He will next star in *Man on Fire* for 20th Century Fox and director Tony Scott. (Variety)



Denzel Washington

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# Thrones for the Home

By Yu Yang

The days of Chinese homes being filled with government-appointed, mass-produced, bland furniture are long gone. Beijingers are now taking great pains to add a personal touch to their homes, as evidenced by the exploding refurbishing business and the furniture superstores that have sprung up all over the city.

People willing to pay to really stand out should check out sofas and seats made by de Sede, a Swiss brand known for its outstanding quality, craftsmanship and design. Beijing Ginko Limited has set up a special showroom for de Sede furniture along Dongzhimenwai.

All de Sede furniture shares only one characteristic - each piece is unique. The come in a nearly infinite variety of blocky, round or geometric forms with high or low back rests and adjustable parts for greater comfort.

The leather used in de Sede pieces comes from only the best cattle from elite European farms, that is hand picked and cut. For this reason, the leather looks and feels fabulous and is surprisingly durable.

A new design for this year is the DS 152 model sofa, a haven of snug shelter and relaxation. The couch's soft oval shape offers plenty of room for two people to sit comfortably. For real armchair cowboys, a flat-screen monitor is an available option, which can transform the sofa into a multimedia control center for one's TV, video and DVD or the Internet.

Such luxury comes at a steep price, though 100,000 yuan, to be exact.

Another option is the DS-220 armchair, which has a modern design featuring compact lines. The central mushroom base can be used to adjust the chair's height, while the backrest tilts to any angle and is coupled with the seat surface so that they maintain perfect positioning. The luxurious chair even has a concealed electric motor that drives its extendable leg rests.

All de Sede sofas need be ordered about three months ahead.

Sofas and chairs of this quality come at a high price, as de Sede pieces range from 30,000 yuan to 300,000 yuan.

**Where:** Inside Gate 1, Room 205, No. 38 Dongzhimen Waidajie, Chaoyang District  
**Open:** 9 am - 5:30 pm **Tel:** 6415 7027

What's your favorite shop, stand, bar or restaurant? We will be very happy to share your experience with all our readers and a mystery gift is waiting for you if we print your story. Please contact us at 6590-2522. E-mail: shopping@ynet.com.



## Book Covers that Beg Judgment

By Salinda

Printing was a Chinese invention, and people in this country have been making books in some form or another for a couple of thousand years. With the rise of modern mass printing, however, books themselves have lost some of their charm.

People interested in the appearance and feel of their books should head to a little store on the sixth floor of Xindong'an Plaza that specializes in hand-sewn, cloth-bound books. The books on offer are not only beautiful, but also valuable collectibles and excellent gifts.



Silk-bound editions of the Tao Te Ching and Song Ci

The stand is a branch of the Xian Zhuan Shuju bookstore, located on Chunxiu Road in Taipingzhuang, which offers a much larger range of choices.

Some of the most attractive books, special editions of famous ancient books like the *Tao Te Ching* and *Song Ci*, are made of silk, rendering them soft to the touch and light. These books have both Chinese and English translations are colorfully illustrated. Priced from 3,000 to 5,000 yuan, such books are intended to be given as gifts and come in rosewood boxes.

Even more valuable are original, hand-made books of engraved prints, only 200 sets of which are available. Some Song and Yuan dynasty books long lost abroad can be found in this collection.

Other stand-outs are miniature books the size of matchboxes that can only be read with a magnifying glass. The most expensive book in the store is an edition of *Sun Tzu's The Art of War*, each page of which is embossed with a piece of gold leaf, priced at 12,800 yuan. The book is written in ancient Chinese with the English translation.

More contemporary works are also available, such as *Manuscripts of Mao Zedong's Poems*, a collection of over 100 of Mao's poems in his own handwriting.

**Where:** Room 621, the sixth floor of Xindong'an Plaza, Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District **Open:** 9 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 13911126553

## Dried, But Not Dead

By Salinda

When people think of dried flowers, they might think of wilting sad blooms drooping in vases or tacky artificial flowers like those found in many restaurants. But, one visit to Jingsa, a store that opened the International Trade Center just five months ago, is enough to change the mind of even the most jaded dried flower skeptic.

The store is more a flower-art showroom than a shop. It is filled with dried flowers and plants in all forms, many skillfully crafted into unusual versions of useful objects, such as flower-based fences, baskets and lamps.

Though dried flowers lose out to their fresh form in terms of fragrance, their obvious advantage is that they do not fade. Many of the offerings in the store are dyed after drying to the point that their vibrant colors can compete with their live cousins. So, considering the complicated process involved in making high-quality dried flowers, their beauty and their near immortality, the store's seemingly high prices are actually pretty reasonable.

Jingsa's flower designers spruce up their products by also incorporating dried fruit, grains and grasses. Unusual objects like bundles of dried mushrooms, plant vases, or hanging gourds make interesting home decorations that can add a natural touch to any room.

**Where:** NB104, International Trade Center, No.1 Jianguomenwai dajie, Chaoyang District  
**Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6505 9517



Dried lilies, 70 yuan per bunch



Photos by Li Shuzhuan

## Tricks of the Magic Trade

By Liang Hongling

True magicians will never reveal the secrets to their tricks, but there is definitely more to it than just quick hands - having the right equipment is key. David Copperfield wannabes should head to the Magic Stone store on Di'anmen Xidajie, one of the few magic specialists in the city, to get the gear they need to wow their friends and family or larger audiences.

The 10-square-meter store is crammed with all kinds of strange items, such as trick cups, bowls, handkerchiefs and knives. Most of the goods come from Taiwan, Hong Kong, the US and Canada, where magic is more popular than it is in China.

There are two main types of items in Magic Stone: close-range, small items and larger stage props, such as those used by real professionals. The close-range goods, also called pocket tricks, come in a wide range of forms, such as cards, cups, balls, dice and hankies. Fortunately for magic amateurs, the store's staff is ready and able to reveal the secrets behind using each item.

The stage props, such as magic hats and wands and vanishing candles, are even more varied and complicated. Among the real treasures of the store are three sets of props used by the famed Copperfield himself. Because such items are targeted at professional magicians, they are much harder to use and come at far higher prices than pocket tricks.

**Where:** Jia 187, Di'anmen Xidajie, Xicheng District **Open:** 11 am-9 pm **Tel:** 6616 3113



Photo by Li Shuzhuan

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# Eating the Night Away

By Wenlong

Sanlitun and Ghost Street (Dongzhimennei) have long been havens for the city's night owls. Though the restaurants and bars in the two areas have fare to sate the late-night munchies, they tend to busy, noisy and questionably clean. Those looking for a more peaceful midnight bite should look out for café restaurants (cha canting), a concept that came over from Hong Kong in the mid-1990s.

These cafés generally serve western foods along with Cantonese snacks, such as egg custard tarts, noodles and fried rice. Few of these restaurants offer booze, but beer is normally available.



## Be There Or Be Square Café

This restaurant shares the name of a Chinese romantic comedy movie, the director of which is one of the investors in the café. It has proven quite successful, as the fourth branch has just opened near Landmark Tower.

Be There or Be Square stands out with the simple quantity of drinks, including soft drinks, fruit juice and beer, and snacks listed on its menu. The décor is bright and pleasant, with yellow seats and elegant glass tables. The only real flaw is the service, as the wait-staff have a tendency of botching orders. Maybe it's an effect of the late work hours.

Specialties of the house, as listed on the bilingual menu, include fried rice with goose (*shao'e fan*, 20 yuan) and mixed coffee with milk tea (*yuan yang*), which goes for 10 yuan for a regular cup and 13 yuan for a large.

**Add:** No.2023, Second floor, Henderson Center, No.18 Jianguomennei Dajie **Tel:** 6518 6515 **Add:** No.71, underground Oriental Plaza, No.1 East Chang'an Avenue **Tel:** 8518 6518 **Open:** 24 hours **Average cost:** 30-50 yuan per person



## Richang Restaurant

Hidden down a little alley near the Beijing Union Hospital, Richang is nonetheless perpetually packed with diners drawn to its outstanding, authentic Cantonese food. Specialties of the house include dishes cooked *bifengtang* and *chichi* style. Bifengtang dishes got their name from a small county in Guangdong province, and share a base of crispy fried garlic, peppers and bread crumbs. Chichi-style foods are served sizzling on hot plates.



Preserved meat with rice Guangdong style (guangshi lawei baozaifan) 25 yuan

Recommended dishes include braised spare ribs bifengtang-style (*bifengtang paigu*, 28 yuan), fried bullfrogs bifengtang-style (*bifengtang niuwa*, 56 yuan per kilogram) and quick-fried cuttlefish (*bifengtang moyuzai*, 22 yuan).

**Add:** No.72 Dongdan Beidajie, Dongcheng District **Open:** 8am - 4am



Photos by Zhuang Jian / Li Shuzhuan

**Tel:** 6525 1783 **Average cost:** 30 - 60 yuan per person

## Jinhua Restaurant

With its Hong Kong-style dishes and porridge and cozy environment, Jinhua Café is a good choice for passing the late hours of a cold winter night.

Egg custard tarts cost only 10 yuan for three, while pork and preserved egg conge (*pidan shourou zhou*) goes for 15 yuan, sliced raw fish porridge (*yupian zhou*) also for 15 yuan, and combination conge of pig stomach, meat ball and pig liver (*jidi zhou*) for 15 yuan.

**Add:** first floor, Jingguang Business Center, Hujialou, Chaoyang District **Open:** 24 hours **Tel:** 6597 8900 **Average cost:** 30-60 yuan per person



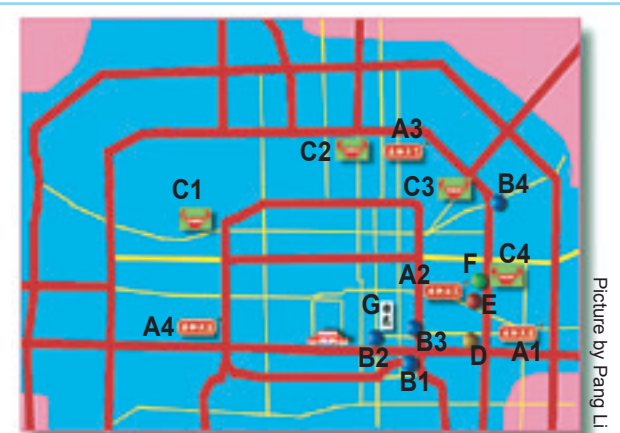
Fried pork chop with onion (yangcong zhupa) 25 yuan

## Gold Lake Restaurant

Beyond Cantonese snacks, this restaurant has added some more northern specialties to appeal to local appetites. That approach has won it a loyal following of hungry creatures of the night.

Recommended items include fried rice with grilled goose meat (*shao'e fan*, 21 yuan), BBQ pork on rice (*chashao fan*, 19 yuan), and grilled beef on rice with curry sauce (*gali niunan fan*, 24 yuan).

**Add:** L132, International Trade Center, Chaoyang District **Open:** 24 hours **Tel:** 6505 6868 **Average cost:** 30-60 yuan per person



Picture by Pang Li

Late night diners looking for something simple, reliable and easy to find can steer towards Yonghedawang and Malan Noodle restaurants, two Chinese-style fast food chains that have branches all over the city. Yonghedawang, a food service giant from Taiwan, offers rice dishes, soybean milk, and fried dough sticks (*youtiao*), while Malan Noodles specializes in hand-pulled noodles that start at a measly 5 yuan. The map above shows the locations of some 24-hour restaurants.

A: Yonghe Dawang Restaurant

A1: Room 2801, Soho, No.88 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

A2: No.19 Chaoyangmenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District Tel: 6599 1925

A3: No.17 Hepingli Zhongjie, Dongcheng District Tel: 8421 5517

A4: D3, Fuxingmenwai Dajie, Xicheng District Tel: 6805 957

B: Be There Or Be Square Café

B1: No.2023, Second floor, Henderson Center, No.18 Jianguomennei Dajie  
B2: No.71, underground Oriental Plaza, No.1 East Chang'an Avenue  
B3: First floor, China Resources Building, Jianguomen Beidajie Tel: 8519 1818  
B4: First floor, Landmark Tower, No.8 Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District, Tel: 6590 6999

C: Malan Noodles

C1: No.11 Beibinhe Lu, Xicheng District  
C2: No.85 Annei Dajie, Dongcheng District Tel: 6402 8463

C3: No.53 Dongzhimen Xiejie, Dongcheng District  
C4: No.50 Tuanjieshu Lu, Chaoyang District Tel: 8598 9203

D: L132, International Trade Center, Chaoyang District

E: first floor, Jingguang Business Center, Hujialou, Chaoyang District

F: Mahua Noodles, Guandongjian Beijie, near Jingguang Building

G: No.72 Dongdan Beidajie, Dongcheng District

## Dining Out

By Wesley Lei

### Garden Lounge

Hot Chocolate Specials. 48-78 yuan. Afternoon tea buffet - introducing a decadence of desserts with the new afternoon tea buffet that will suit everyone's taste buds. **Where:** St. Regis Hotel, 21 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang **When:** November **Tel:** 6460 6688 ext. 2381

### Le Brioche

Home-made deli specials, terrines, breads, ice cream, and a wide selection of cakes and pastries for

dining in or taking away. **Where:** First floor, Novotel Peace Hotel, No. 3 Jinyu Hutong, Dongcheng **When:** Daily 8am-10pm **Tel:** 6512 8833 ext. 6608

### Big Easy

Serving Cajun food, the heavy, deep-fry-o-centric crawfish-and-jambalaya-focused food from America's deep south. Live music every night. **Where:** Chaoyang Park South Gate, Chaoyang **When:** Daily 5pm-2am, **Cost:** under RMB100 per person **Tel:** 6508 6776

### Henry J. Bean's Bar & Grill

Just like America: if you don't come out in a food coma, you haven't

cleaned your plate. Is it surprising we're overweight? Live music Monday through Saturday. **Where:** First floor, China World Hotel, Chaoyang **When:** Daily 11:30am-2am, **Cost:** RMB100-200 per person **Tel:** 6505 2266 ext.6569.

### Mrs. Shanan's Bagels

Breakfasts of fresh bagels with a schmere and lox, or muffins and cheesecake for lunch. **Where:** No. A3 Zhaojiu Road, Jiuxianqiao, Chaoyang **When:** Daily 8am-5pm, closes at 4pm on weekends, **Cost:** under RMB100 **Tel:** 6435 9561

### Coffee Garden

Coffee Garden serves on aver-

age 40 kilograms of lobster every hour on Friday nights. The lobsters are grilled on the spot by order. **Where:** Kerry Center Hotel, 1 Guanghua Road, Chaoyang **When:** Every Friday 5:30-10 pm **Cost:** RMB 188 per person **Tel:** 6561 8833 ext.40.

### TGI Friday's

Even the salads would feed a garrison of the People's Liberation Army. Basic burgers, chicken fingers, potato skins, pastas, fajitas, salads. **Where:** 19 Dong Sanhuan Ring, Chaoyang District **When:** Daily 11:30am-11:30pm, **Cost:** RMB200-300 **Tel:** 6597 5314

## FOOD CURE

## Walnut Remedies



By Wenlong

Though sometimes overlooked for the more conventional peanuts or even almonds, walnuts, a traditional Chinese delicacy, are not only tasty, but can be made into many kinds of healthy snacks.

Medical research has shown that walnuts contain high amounts of unsaturated fatty acids, protein, phosphorous, calcium and various vitamins.

Walnuts are good for the brain according to traditional Chinese medicine. The nuts' rich phosphorous content can nurture neurons, improve memory and prevent the aging of the brain.

One simple way to get a tasty walnut fix involves mashing equal amounts walnuts and sesame seeds, then adding sugar to the mix. Twenty grams of this concoction every morning can give the brain and body a good kick-start.

Although many nuts have been cursed as being high in cholesterol, eating walnuts can actually help the body consume excess saturated fat and low-density protein, effectively controlling blood cholesterol levels. Some doctors say snacking on walnuts is one of the easiest ways to prevent cardiovascular disease.

In addition, a brew of two walnuts boiled and then spiked with a bit of chopped ginger and some optional sugar drank every night is a delicious way to treat asthma.

## Italian Night Dream at Peppinos

By Wenlong

At the invitation of Walter Lanfranchi, the chef of Peppinos Restaurant at the Shangri-La Hotel, I was lucky enough to try delicacies from the Piedmont region in the northwest of Italy, cooked by the chef himself. Piedmont, nestled in the Alps, is widely renowned for excellent beef, mushrooms and wine, and its cuisine is also rich in poultry and game with strong flavors.

A meal at Peppinos starts with a basket of assorted breads served with delectable balsamic vinegar. I then moved onto the free trays of varied vegetable antipastos that are part of the restaurant's buffet deal on Wednesdays and Sundays.

I ordered chicken pea soup with braised pork spare rib at the relatively low price of 38 yuan, and braised beef in Barolo wine served with risotto Piedmont style, at 145 yuan. The risotto is one of the high-

lights in this month's Italian cuisine promotion. It was very tasty, but oily. Another specialty of chef Lanfranchi is golden fried beefsteak stuffed with ham and Fontina-cheese served with potato and sausage (gratin), 155 yuan, which is definitely expensive, but also quite satisfying.

Hot chocolate was my choice for closing the meal, served with some nice homemade cookies. Stuffed and warmed, I left feeling impervious to the cold.

Every Wednesday and Sunday evening, Peppinos offers a pasta buffet night for 100 yuan per person plus 15 percent surcharge, in which diners can enjoy free antipasto, bottomless pasta and one glass of wine or a desert.

**Add:** Shangri-La Hotel, No.29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian District **Open:** 11:30am-2:30pm; 6pm-10:30pm **Tel:** 68412211 ext.2727 **Average cost:** 150 yuan per person



## Legend of 'Kuai Zi'

By Wenlong

It's hardly a surprise that there are no knives or forks on the average Chinese table, only chopsticks and spoons. However, chopsticks should not be taken for granted, either in their cultural importance or the skill involved in using them.

Chopsticks are called kuaizi in Chinese, a shortened version of "*kuaisheng guizi*", which means "may you have a baby soon." Hence there is a traditional wedding ritual in which chopsticks are dropped into the nuptial chamber, accompanied by shouts of "*kuaisheng guizi*" to bless the newlyweds.

Aside from the obvious notions of dropping them on the floor and using them to fling food, there are many taboos associated with chopsticks. The most severe is not to stick them upright in a bowl of rice, because they resemble sticks of incense used in funerals. Another is not to knock on a rice bowl with chopsticks, because it makes one look like a beggar pleading for food.

The first recorded use of Chinese chopsticks came 3,100 years ago, when a Western



Zhou Dynasty (11th century - 770BC) king wielded a pair of ivory chopsticks around 1144 BC. According to legend, however, kuaizi were invented by Da Yu, a Xia dynasty king known for fighting floods, who used a pair of twigs snapped from a tree to remove boiled meat from a pot over 4,000 years ago. Since then, chopsticks have developed to be available in a vast array of materials, including bamboo, wood, metal, animal horn, jade, ivory, porcelain and plastic.

The proper way of using chopsticks is similar to that for wielding a brush to write Chinese calligraphy. In fact, scholars have long observed that skilled calligraphers are normally also nimble with their kuaizi.





Bright Cooperation

## Trade Talks

At the invitation of the Ministry of Chinese Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, the Minister of Quebec Industry and Trade will make an official visit to China from November 11 to 29, along with 50 representatives of enterprise and educational circles. The entrepreneurs from Quebec and China will hold talks on trade architecture, communication, information and environment protection.

**Where:** 1st Floor, E building Beijing Hotel **When:** November 22, 9 am **Tel:** 6532 3536 ext 3690/3692

## Music

### Chopin years — Polish Music Week

Five famous pianists from Poland will perform. The opening concert and ceremony will feature Piotr Paleczny, accompanied by the China Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Marek Pi-jarowski.

**Where:** National Library Concert Hall **When:** November 27–30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50–380 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

### Norway Royal Military Band

Norway Royal Military Band was founded in the 17th century. It is one of the most famous bands in Europe.

**Where:** Beijing Exhibition Theatre **When:** November 23, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60–380 yuan **Tel:** 6466 9968, 6466 9978 **Website:** www.piao.com.cn/english

### Vienna New Year's Day Concert Programs

Conducted by Li Ling and performed by China Film Philharmonic

**Where:** the Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** November 23 **Admission:** 50–380 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285



China Philharmonic Orchestra

### Asian Orchestra

The Asian Symphony Orchestra made up of musicians from Japan, South Korea and China will play a diverse selection, including "Rainbow" and "Flying Songs".

**Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** November 22, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50–500 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

### Beethoven's Works

China Philharmonic Orchestra is to hold a series of concerts highlighting Beethoven's works. Under the baton of Klaus Weise, with Jorg Demus playing the piano, it will play Beethoven's Piano Concerto no 5 in E Flat-Major, and Symphony no 5 in C Minor.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** November 24, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext 5126

### Folk Music

The Traditional Orchestra of China National Opera and Dance Theatre centers on traditional works such as "Moonlight Reflected on Spring, No. 2" and "Butterfly Lovers".

**Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** November 24 **Admission:** 50–500 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

## Performance



Tibetan Antelope

### Paean of life—Tibetan Antelope

This dance performance is set in the place where the Earth is nearest to the sky. In the depopulated zone of the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau, there is a mysterious kingdom where Tibetan Antelopes, strong and nimble, are especially revered. Sadly this animal is on the brink of extinction.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** November 22–23 **Admission:** 220–1000 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext 5176

### The Feeling of Yimeng

Yimeng, in Shangdong Province, was home to over 200 generals of the Red Army. In the new century, the local people must still work hard for a happy

life. The dance focuses on the lives of the ordinary people.

**Where:** Cultural Palace of the Nationalities **When:** November 26–27, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60–380 yuan **Tel:** 6466 9968



A poster for Xixiang

### The Story of Xixiang

This song and dance performance is about how love is a flower, but also a bitter pill.

**Where:** Children's Theatre **When:** till December 3, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 40–180 yuan **Tel:** 6512 9689

## Exhibitions

### China's Ancient Bridges

The exhibition shows the recent works of painter Charles Chauderlot, who recently traveled through five provinces of China. His aim was to reproduce the ancient grandeur and magnificence of China's famous ancient bridges with his unique visual and artistic technique.

**Where:** Wenhua Hall, 2nd Floor Novetel Peace **When:** till November 23, 10 am–9 pm **Tel:** 13901074603, 13901152316

### Group Exhibition of Portrait Paintings

Portraits by Hu Yongkai, Gao Wengang, Zhang Zhenhua, Zhangwei, Li Guangping and Guang Yuliang. Hu Yongkai has created a unique visual concept of oriental women.

**Where:** Wangfeng Art Gallery, 136 Nanchizi Dajie Dongcheng **When:** November 22–December 5, 9 am–5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6528 9103 **Email:** newartcenter@163.com



Suzhou embroidery: photo of the Cliton family

### South Yangtze Superb Furniture

An exhibition of Ming and Qing furniture and embroideries.

**Where:** Artall Arts Delicacies, 6 Xindong'an Plaza, Wangfujing Dajie **When:** till November 26 **Tel:** 6528 1628

### Police Past and Present

A comprehensive exhibition on the history of law enforcement. The museum boasts 7,000 exhibits, some dating back to the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 220). It houses photos, models and writings relating the history of the police. It also has a modern feel with exhibits involving high-tech sound, lighting and electronics systems.

**Where:** Beijing Police Museum, 36 Dongjiaominxiang **When:** Daily 9 am–4 pm Tuesday–Sunday **Route:** take the subway to Tiandong or Qianmen



Noon by Yi Zhaoyu

### A New Life

The Department of Prints of the Central Academy of Fine Art is organizing the final exhibition for this year's graduates. Their projects for their graduation have been carefully planned out through studying of tradi-

tional arts and cultures, and current social movements.

**Where:** Creation Galley, 4 Ritan Lu, Chaoyang **When:** November 23–December 7 **Tel:** 8561 7570 **Email:** kecg\_cn@sina.com

### Artifact Exhibition

This exhibition commemorates the 30th anniversary of former US President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China and reviews the diplomatic relations between the two countries. The exhibition presents over 200 important artifacts including pictures, original handwriting, clothes, gifts and formerly classified government documents.

**Where:** Museum of Chinese History **When:** till November 30, 9 am–5 pm **Tel:** 6512 8321

### Japanese Prints Retrospective Exhibition

The exhibition reviews print development in Japan from 1950 to 1990. The 75 exhibits are works by 45 Japanese printmakers in various materials over the four decades.

**Where:** Capital Museum, 13 Guozijianjie **When:** November 22–December 1 **Tel:** 6401 2799

### Watercolor Exhibition

Dong Kingman, a Chinese American, used watercolor in his paintings during the 1930s in recording the brilliance of the world.

**Where:** Museum of the Chinese Revolution **When:** till November 28, 9 am–5 pm **Tel:** 6526 3355

## Stage



Liuwei (left) in Brothers

### Brothers

Er Xian and Xiao Luo are two well-educated young men whose friendship was cemented during the Cultural Revolution. However, when both embrace the new life brought on them by the onset of the reform and open-door policy in the 1980s, one takes advantage of the other for his own financial benefit.

**Where:** Capital Theatre **When:** till December 1 **Admission:** 150–280 yuan **Tel:** 64669968

## Activities

### Swiss Ball

The Swiss Society of Beijing is hosting the Swiss Carnival Ball this year. Guests are encouraged to turn out in extravagant carnival gear and masks. Cocktails at 7 pm, dinner at 8 pm. Lucky draw offers air tickets and stays in luxury hotels.

**Where:** Holiday Inn Lido ballroom, Jiangtai lu, Chaoyang **When:** November 30, 7 pm onwards, reservations must be made before November 25 **Admission:** 500 yuan **Tel:** 6532 2736 ext 219

### A Night of Revelry

There will be 300 Free Drinks, thanks to sponsors Urban Divers, a Beijing swimming club. As well as cheap beers, get some special latin cocktails and chow on sandwiches and pizzas. There will also be live music from Latinos' Colombian house-band Expresion Latina! Special prizes also available.

**Where:** Latinos, South Gate of Chaoyang Park **When:** November 27, 7 pm **Tel:** 65079898.

### Community Blood Drive

A little time, a bit of blood, a big effect. Give blood at the November Blood Drive, which will take place at Beijing United Family Hospital and Clinics.

**Where:** Beijing United Family Hospital and Clinics **When:** November 23, 10 am–1 pm **Tel:** 6433 3960 ext 262 **Email:** liaison@bjunited.com.cn

### Newcomers, Unite!

If you are staying in Beijing this winter, the International Newcomers' Network will provide information on where to buy specialty foods and meats for the holidays, as well as religious services.

**Where:** Third floor Capital Mansions Athletic Center **When:** November 25, 10 am–noon **Admission:** 30 yuan, including tea, coffee and pastry **Email:** innchn@bigfoot.com

### Tour of Pagoda and Inscribed Stone Slab Museum

A tour of the newly opened Five Pagoda Temple and the huge outdoor stone



Pagoda Temple

slab museum located behind Beijing Zoo. This tour features two topics: evolution and style of Chinese Pagodas and that of inscribed stone slabs.

**Where:** in front of Purple Bamboo Park (east entrance), beside the National Library, Baishiqiao Road, Haidian **When:** November 23, 2:30–4 pm **Admission:** adults 30 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 8462 2081

### Dive Club

Dive Club meets to discuss Chinese and South Asian dive trip destinations.

**Where:** Jazz-Ya, Sanlitun Beijie, Chaoyang **When:** November 26, 7:30–10:30 pm **Admission:** membership 50 yuan **Email:** zues@urbandivers.com

## Sports

### The "get lost twice" Walk

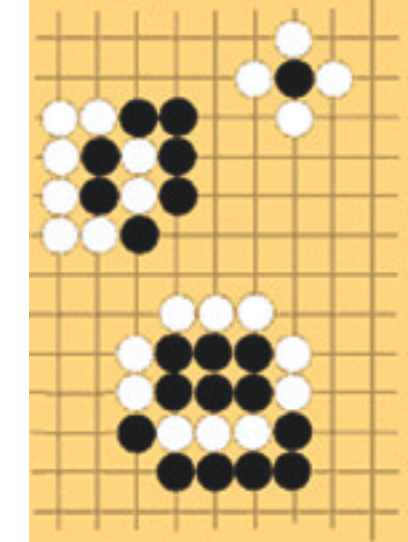
This walk is mainly on a wide trail, more like a small road, with only two hills to climb. Up the country path and through the woods, you can enjoy a wonderful view: lonely farms, villages, country roads and windy ridges. Travel time is 2 hours from the lido, walking time is four hours. Start at 8:30 am at the Lido outside Starbucks, and come back at 5:00 pm.

**Where:** Ping Gu, North east of Beijing **When:** November 24 **Admission:** adults 150 yuan, children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13701003694 **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

### A Free Month

Kerry Sports is offering a free month on all 12-month memberships. 13 months for the price of 12 during the month of November Only.

**Where:** 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang **When:** till November 31 **Tel:** 6561 8833



### Chinese Chess

Weiqi is a top-level version of the game with profound cultural depth, which can help to improve one's concentration, calculation, memory and creativity.

**Where:** Lee's Antique Carpets, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** November 24, 5–7 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 8851 4913

## Parties

### Metal Screams

Rock magazine Pain Killer has gathered China's three premier hard rock bands for a gig. Nether World, Preaching Day and Suffocation will play their latest tunes.

**Where:** CD Cafe, south of the Agricultural Exhibition Centre, Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang **When:** November 23, 9 pm **Tel:** 6501 8877 ext 3032

### Rap Metal and Rock

Miserable Faith (Tongku de Xinyang), one of the capital's best, perform their brand of rap metal.

**Where:** Get Lucky, 500 meters east of south gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** November 22–23, 9:30 pm **Admission:** adults 30 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109, 6420 4249

### The Fresh Experience

This evening will feature a Japanese DJ, a wine tasting session and a digital art presentation.

**Where:** The Loft, 4 the Worker's Stadium, Chaoyang **When:** November 22–23, 10am–2pm **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6501 7501

### All the Ladies

Catch Colour, an all-girl pop-rock outfit.

**Where:** What Bar, south of University of International Business and Economics **When:** November 23, 9 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan, includes one beer **Tel:** 13910209249

### Franco-Fashion

The recently opened Yan club hosts the Mushi fashion show highlighting the best that France has to offer.

**Where:** 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** November 27, 9 pm **Tel:** 8457 3506

## Lecture



Stone Lion

### The Architecture of the Forbidden City

Why was the Forbidden City painted red and yellow with only one building inside painted black? Why does the front half of the city have no trees? What was the importance of numbers in the layout and planning? What are the symbolic meanings of the monuments, decor and design? Professor Zhao Tiesheng will discuss all this and more.

**Where:** Lee's Antique Carpets, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** November 24, 2–4:30 pm **Admission:** adults 50 yuan, students 30 yuan **Tel:** 8851 4913

### Walk & Talk Ming and Qing Furniture

Appraisal of Ming and Qing furniture, from design to materials used. A lecture by Mr. Hu Desheng, Palace Museum researcher and ancient furniture specialist.

**Where:** Luo Yang Room, 2/F, Kempinski Hotel **When:** November 23, 2–4:30 pm **Admission:** 200 yuan, including coffee break & English translation **Tel:** 8451 8767 **Email:** craac@craac.org.

## Movies

### Antonia's Line

The film is a heady, life-affirming mixture of drama, comedy and romance. The story tells of four generations of women, from Antonia to her granddaughter, after the end of World War II and continuing for over 40 years. In Dutch with Chinese and English subtitles.

**Where:** Space for Imagination **When:** November 23, 7 pm **Admission:** 5 yuan **Tel:** 6279 1280

### Unfair Competition

In 1938, in Rome, two families, one Jewish and the other Catholic, are competing clothing merchants. However Mussolini's new racial laws are put into effect, tilting the balance. In Italian with English subtitles.

**Where:** Cultural Office of Italian Embassy **When:** November 28, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187



Scene from Le Placard

### Le Placard (The Closet)

When Francois Pignon, an accountant for a rubber factory, is about to be fired, he spreads a rumor that he's gay so that the company will be afraid to fire him, lest they come under fire for sexual discrimination. Chinese subtitles.

**Where:** Tsinghua University, the Great Hall **When:** November 23, 7 pm **Tel:** 139012100504

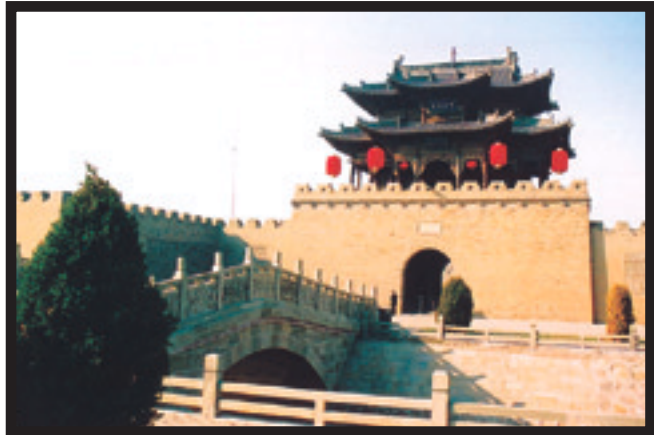
We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2522

By Guo Yuandan

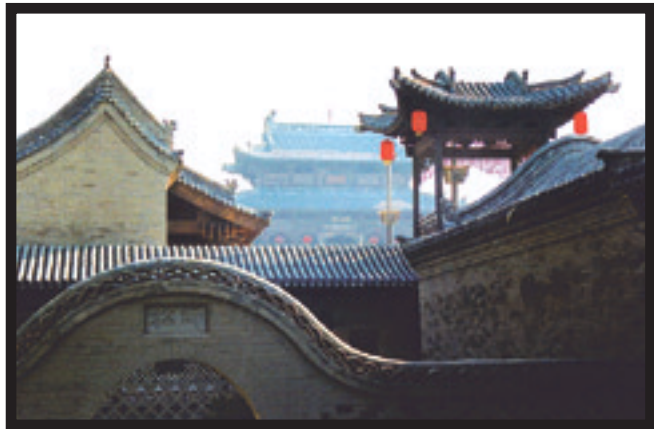




# Courtyard Splendor in Shanxi



Northeast gate of the courtyard



Pavilion view from Ancestral Shrine



Lion Garden

Photos by Dong Zhigang

By Shan Jinliang

Driving through Shanxi, the landscape can seem a little monotonous, with its barren hills and small houses. That makes it all the more stunning when you come to a huge courtyard with tall towers in Yuci (榆次), a central city of the province.

This is the famous Chang family courtyard (常家庄园), built in the Qing Dynasty. The Changs used to be one of the most prominent business families in China. Today, only a quarter of the original residence remains, wars and disrepair having seen to the rest. However, the courtyard still attracts tourists and historians from all over China.

Today, the courtyard has an area of 120,000 square meters, making it the largest of the remaining residences of the Shanxi business families. It's hard to believe that the family that built and owned this place started out as shepherds.

## The Chinese dream

Chang Zhonglin came to Chewang Village (车辋村) near Yuci City in the Hongzhi Age (1488-1506) of the Ming Dynasty. He worked as a shepherd for a local landlord. Six generations later, his family had started to run their own business.

The Chang family business took off in the Kangxi Age (1662-1723) of the Qing Dynasty when Chang Wangda and his father Chang Wei ran a cloth shop. Chang Wei spent no cash on traveling between big city markets, and his acumen combined with his frugal nature ensured the success of the business.

From the early 1720s, the family turned to the tea trade with Russia, and they established branches in 11 regions in Russia and the nearby countries, extending their "Tea Road" across more than 5,000 kilometers.

Tea took up 94 percent of the entire trade between the Qing Dynasty and Russia; the trade was valued at 124 million roubles in 1843.



Wall Art

## Tea builds largest business family courtyard

From 1756, the family was able to splash the cash and the building of their courtyard lasted for several generations. With 80 courtyards and 3,500 rooms, the yard covered an area of around half a million square meters, more than half the 720,000-square-meter Forbidden City. More than 1,000 servants worked for the family at this time.

The collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the ensuing wars ruined the trade with Russia and other domestic regions. The courtyard also suffered the effects of wars and revolutions, and it was not until 2000 that the Shanxi government began the restoration work.

## Long street, long history

A few steps from the Northeast gate is the ancestral shrine of the family. It is the largest ancestral shrine in China. The first of its three halls was an entrance in regular times and was also used as an opera house. The second hall was for holding memorial ceremonies for Chang family ancestors, and the last was sensibly designed for resting after the ceremonies.



Thousands of Wood, Stone and Brick Carvings adorn the courtyard

In between the halls are the rooms introducing the family history, the family tree and renowned Chang family members. No women are listed or mentioned.

According to the introduction, the family saw education as the first priority for all members and only the best scholars were chosen to run the family business. The Chang family achieved high positions in the country's government, but busi-

nies for Chang family ancestors, and the last was sensibly designed for resting after the ceremonies.



A Wall Carving



Brick Embossment

ness was always the priority.

The Changs established the country's largest family library, the first modern school in the province and the first school for women.

## Garden to match the Forbidden City garden

The courtyard's Jingyuan Garden (静园) is a celebrated feature. It covers 80,000 square meters. Around the Zhaoyu Lake in the center are the Shiyuan Garden (Lion Garden), South China-styled Xiaoyuan Garden (Rest Garden) and Xingyuan Garden (Almond Garden) with zigzagging paths across them.



Stone Sculpture

## How to get there:

1) By driving: Drive on the Beijing-Shijiazhuang Expressway (北京-石家庄高速公路) for two and a half hours to the Taiyuan-Jiuguan Expressway (太原-旧关高速公路), and in three hours will see the No. 108 State Road (108国道). Turn south and drive for one hour to Yuci, and the transport signs will show the way to the Chang Family Courtyard.

2) By train: Take the K701, K717 or 2519 train from Beijing to Taiyuan (北京-太原), and the train will arrive at Taiyuan in 10 hours. A bus or a minibus to the Chang Family Courtyard will take one hour.

3) Tour groups: The Sunny Bus travel group run by China Youth Travel Service (CYTS) offers two-day, three-day or four-day tours to Shanxi, including a stop at the courtyard. Tours will set off on Friday or Saturday at the Beijing Capital Hotel (北京首都大酒店). For reservations: 6568 6611, for singles 6568 6622 for groups.



Brick Carvings around a Wood Carved Lattice Window

## Cultural Tour

# Finding Fahua

By Wang Yong/Huang Lisha

I was looking for a Tibetan bar called Guge (古格). I've always been interested in Tibet, so when I heard the bar was holding a celebration for its first anniversary I decided to go. I knew it was in Fahua Temple Street (法华寺街), so off I went.

I got the wrong Fahua. It's an easy mistake to make, as the street I went to is pretty well known, being the location of the east gate of the Temple of Heaven and right next to Hongqiao Market (红桥市场). I later discovered that the bar was in Fahua Temple Street, Wei Gong Cun (魏公村), Haidian Dis-

trict. But as errors go, this one certainly had an upside. It led me to the Fahua Temple (法华寺) for the first time.

This temple, which was built in the Ming Dynasty, is now home to the Wanda clothing company but much of it remains. It used to be the residence of Liutong, a eunuch who lived in the Jingtai Period. It was renovated and developed by Kangxi and Tongzhi and became one of the biggest temples in the outer city of Beijing.

There used to be numerous halls and pavilions but now there's just the 3-floor Great Hall and the west and the east side halls. There are also dozens of side courtyards and houses from the original temple nearby.

In the middle period of the Qing Dynasty, Fahua Temple attracted a large number of pilgrims. It was famous for its large Crabapple trees. Normally this tree only flowers once a year, but the ones in the temple flowered

twice, in Spring and in Autumn.

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, the temple was home to warlord Yuan Shikai who later became President of the Republic. In 1898, Tan Sitong, one of the leaders of the Reform Movement went to visit Yuan at the temple on the orders of Emperor Guangxu.

He was hoping to win Yuan over to the cause but Yuan betrayed him to the Empress Dowager Cixi, who had him executed.

The fame of the Temple declined after that and now it requires a fairly vivid imagination to visualize its former glory.

One other point of local interest is that in 1921, Beijing Streetcar Factory was established in Dong Da Di (东大地 now part of Fahua Temple Street). In 1924, the first streetcar in Beijing emerged from here.

Where: 67, Fahua Temple Street (法华寺街), Chongwen District (崇文区).